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TIME

AND

THE END OF TIME,

IN TWO DISCOURSES:

THE FIRST ON REDEMPTION OF TIME, THE SECOND ON THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

BY JOHN FOX,

AUTHOR OF THE "BOOK OF MARTYRS."

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—PSALM xc. 12.

'Her filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully."—LAM. i. 9.

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PREFACE.

"TIME, AND THE END OF TIME:" published in 1746, by John Robertson and Mr. M'Lean, Booksellers, in the Saltmarket, Glasgow; a small, but deeply impressive work, long out of print, was lately found by a lady, who has derived much advantage from its perusal, in the residence of John Robertson, Esq., Ballinahench Castle, County Galway, Ireland. The copy, from which this edition has been re-printed, was brought to Scotland, and shown to several pious friends, who earnestly advised its re-publication, as calculated to be for the comfort of the children of God, and as likely to afford to anxious enquirers abundant sources of *spiritual comfort* and *rejoicing*.

With the earnest prayer that it may tend

to sooth and sustain, when the world has been tried and found wanting, and that it may raise many souls on the wings of holy contemplation to survey their promised rest, "TIME, AND THE END OF TIME," once more takes its place amongst those religious publications which, with God's blessing, have directed so many on their heavenward journey.

Glasgow, 1855.

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE OF MR. JOHN FOX.

Mr. John Fox was born at Boston, in Lincolnshire, of honest and reputable parents, in the year 1517. His father died when he was very young; but his mother married again, in consequence of which he fell under the tutelage of a father-in-law, with whom he continued till he was about sixteen years of age; when he was sent to the University of Oxford, and there entered of Brazen-Nose College. He was placed under the care of Mr. John Hawarden, Fellow of that College.

In 1538, he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts: and having distinguished himself by his parts and learning, he was chosen Fellow of Magdalen College, and proceeded Master of Arts in 1543.

He discovered in his younger years a genius for poetry, and wrote several Latin Comedies, the subjects of which were taken from the Scriptures. One of his Comedies was entitled *De Christo Triumphante*, was printed at London in 1551, and at Basil in 1556, in 8vo. which was translated into English, by Richard Day, son of John Day, an eminent Printer in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and published with this title, CHRIST JESUS *Triumphant. Wherein is described the glorious Triumph and Conquest of* CHRIST *over Sin, Death, and the Law, &c.* London, 1579. It was again published at London in 1672, and dedicated to all Schoolmasters, in order that it might be admitted into their respective Schools, for the peculiar elegance of its style, by T.C.M.A. of Sidney College in Cambridge.

Mr. Fox applied himself with great assiduity to the study of Divinity, and took great pains to discover where the truth lay in those controversies which were then so warmly agitated in the Christian world. And accordingly his son informs us, that before he was thirty years of age, he had read over all the Greek and Latin Fathers, the Schoolmen, and the Decrees of Councils, and had also acquired a competent skill in the Hebrew language. He was indefatigable in his application to study; he sometimes sat up whole nights

at it; and avoiding company of every kind, betook himself to the most solitary retirements.

In the course of his inquiries, he became thoroughly convinced of the errors of Popery; and his alienation from the Established Church was suspected by his absenting himself from public worship. His enemies were soon confirmed in their suspicions of his heretical pravity; he was therefore accused of heresy, and condemned by the judgment of the College, and expelled the house. However, as he escaped with his life, it was thought that he received favourable treatment. This was in the year 1545.

Mr. Fox now lost the favour of his friends; they were not willing nor did they think it safe to countenance or protect one convicted of so heinous a crime as heresy. And his father-in-law made this a handle for withholding from him his parental estate, thinking, probably, that he, who stood in danger of the law himself, would with difficulty find relief from it. Being thus forsaken by his friends, he was reduced to great distress; when he was taken into the house of Sir T. Lucy, of Warwickshire, to be tutor to his children, Here he married the daughter of a citizen of Coventry, and continued in Sir Thomas's family till his pupils were grown up: after which, his father-in-law being somewhat reconciled to him

he continued some time at his house, and was also some time at the house of his wife's father in Coventry. He removed to London a few years before King Henry VIII.'s death; but having there neither employment nor preferment, he was driven to the most extreme distress, from which he is said to have been delivered in a most extraordinary way. His son tells us, that as Mr. Fox one day sat in St. Paul's Church, spent with long fasting, his countenance thin, and eyes hollow like a ghastly dying man, every one shunning a a spectacle of so much horror! there came unto him one whom he never remembered to have seen before, who, taking a seat beside him, and saluting him with much familiarity, thrust a sum of money into his hand, bidding him be of good cheer, and take the use of what he had given him to prolong his life; and told him that, in a short time he would be placed in a more certain condition of livelihood. Mr. Fox could never learn who that man was, by whose so seasonable bounty, in that extreme necessity, he had been relieved; though he earnestly endeavoured to find him out. He was soon after taken into the service of the Duchess of Richmond, to be tutor to the children of her brother, the famous Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: for, upon the commitment of that nobleman, together with his father, the Duke of

Norfolk, to the Tower, the children of the Earl were sent to be educated under the care and inspection of the Duchess Dowager of Richmond.

Mr. Fox continued to live in this family, at Ryegate in Surrey, during the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII., and the whole of his son Edward's, being at this time protected by one of his pupils, who was then Duke of Norfolk. But Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, endeavoured to effectuate the ruin of Mr. Fox: and he was therefore obliged to quit his native country, and seek shelter abroad. The young Duke having caused every thing necessary to be prepared for his tutor's voyage. Mr. Fox set sail from Ipswich, having taken his wife along with him, who was then far gone with child, and being accompanied with some other persons, who also went abroad on account of religion. A storm arising, they were obliged, the next day, to put back to port; where, having with much difficulty arrived, Mr. Fox found that the Bishop of Winchester had issued out a warrant for apprehending him, and caused the most diligent search to be made for him. Upon which he prevailed with the master of the ship to put to sea again, though the attempt was very hazardous. However, in two days they arrived safe at Newport Haven, from whence Mr. Fox and his company travelled to Antwerp, and Frank-

fort, and thence to Basil. He maintained himself and family in that city, by correcting for OPORINUS an eminent Printer. And it was here that he laid the plan of his Acts and Monuments of the Church, or Book of Martyrs.

When Queen Elizabeth was settled on the throne, Mr. Fox returned to England, where he was received in a kind and friendly manner by his pupil the Duke of Norfolk, who maintained him at his house, and settled a pension on him, which was afterwards confirmed to him by that nobleman's son, the Duke of Suffolk. Nor did the good man's successes stop here. On being recommended to the Queen, by her Secretary of State, the great Cecil, her Majesty granted him the Prebendary of Shipton, in the Cathedral of Salisbury, which was, in a manner, forced upon him; for it was with difficulty that he could be persuaded to accept of it. And though he had many great and powerful friends, as the Prelates Grindal, Pilkington, and Aylmer, Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Francis Drake, and Sir Thomas Gresham, who would have raised him to very considerable preferments, yet he declined them, because he did not chuse to subscribe to the Articles required by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and disapproved of some of the ceremonies of the Church. However, Bishop Parker summoned Mr.

Fox to subscribe, that the general reputation of his piety might give the greater countenance to Conformity. But when he was called upon to suscribe, he took his Greek Testament out of his pocket, and said, "To this will I subscribe." And when they required him to subscribe the Canons he refused, saysng, "I have nothing in the Church but a Prebend in Salisbury, and much good may it do you, if you take it from me." However he continued in it till his death; such respect did the Bishops, most of them formerly his fellow-exiles, bear to his age, parts, and labours. But though Mr. Fox refused conformity to the Ceremonies of the Church, he behaved with great moderation, and disapproved of the warmth of some of the more zealous Puritans.

He died on the 18th of April, 1587, in the 70th year of his age, greatly lamented; and was buried in the Chancel of St. Giles' Church, in Cripplegate, where a monument was erected to his memory. He left two sons, Samuel and Thomas. Samuel became Fellow of Magdalen College in Oxford, and was afterwards Steward to Sir Thomas Heneage, Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Elizabeth.

ON THE REDEMPTION OF TIME.

DISCOURSE I.

"*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*"—EPHESIANS v. 16.

IN the beginning of the chapter, the Apostle exhorts Christians to holiness in general, by setting before them a perfect pattern, "Be ye followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love." The favourites of Heaven must imitate their Father, and, like Gideon's brethren, resemble the children of a King; the precept is, "Be ye holy, be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Then he goes on to press this great duty, more particularly upon all in their several relations; which he

urgeth by many arguments. And in the text he seemeth to point out the opportunity to put those and all other Christian duties into practice: "See that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the Time."

Explication of the Words.

Time is taken under a double notion; there is the *space* of *time*, and there is the *opportunity* of *time*: Time and opportunity differ: Time is the duration or succession of so many minutes, hours, days or years, one after the other, from the beginning of a man's life to the end thereof. Job vii. 1, "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?" Opportunity is the time appointed and fitted, in order to this or that work or business, viz. A meeting of time and means together, to effect the end. This is called the season or tempestivity of time, when time, tide and wind meet and clasp together. Eccles. iii. 1, "To every thing there is a season," or opportunity of doing. Time may be continued when the season of time is ended; the sails of time may be aloft, when the gale of oppor-

tunity is lost. Every time is not a spring-time, a seed-time, a gaining-time; manna was not to be had but in the morning. The beauty of time is the opportunity of time. Eccles. iii. 11, "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time." This part of time we are to redeem. Redeeming denotes the excellent worth and preciousness of time, a commodity to be valued above the gold of Ophir; Solomon bids us "Buy the Truth," Prov. xxiii. 23. Our dear Lord counselled a miserable church to "Buy gold and white raiment," Rev. iii. 18. And Paul exhorts us to buy the Time; a jewel of that price which must be redeemed at any rate; base, vile things are not wont to be redeemed, but things of worth, namely, men's liberties, estates, lives, &c. so our precious time: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

The words contain two general parts: 1. An exhortation to Duty, "Redeem the time." 2. The reason of it, "Because the days are evil."

From the words we may observe this Doctrine, which shall be the subject of my ensuing discourse.

Doct. The best of saints, or the redeemed of God, have need to redeem the time.

This epistle was written to a very famous, flourishing Church, in the purest times of the gospel, among whom there were rare and singular Christians; they were called "Saints, and faithful in Christ Jesus," Chap. i. 1, and, "Chosen of God in Christ, before the foundation of the world," ver. 4. and really converted and brought into a state of life. Moreover, they had learned the duty of mortification, one of the hardest lessons in the school of Christ, Chap. iv. 22, and were also "Sealed unto the day of redemption," Chap. iv. 30, and, i. 13. "Had the earnest of their heavenly inheritance."—And yet they, whose attainments were so high, must redeem the time. The same thing is prest in different terms, Eccles. ix. 10. It is called "a working while it is day," John ix. 4. In handling of this Proposition, I shall shew you,

1. When time may be said to be redeemed.
2. What time must be redeemed.
3. How time must be redeemed.
4. Why time is to be redeemed.
5. Motives and directions to help you.

First, When is time to be redeemed?

Answer. When time and duty, like those two twins, Jacob and Esau, take hold one of another; or, as two loving yoke-fellows, go hand in hand; when duty attends time, as the shadow the body, or as the maiden her mistress. This is to fill up time with duty, and to take opportunity by the firelock; or in the Scripture phrase, to do the work of the day in the day. And, to this end, opportunities or seasons are to be desired, as they offer an occasion of service, and of doing our duty. This we may see in holy David, Psal. cxxii. 1. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the House of the Lord." When there was a way open to worship God, in the beauty of holiness, David rejoiced to see the true worshippers improve their opportunity to go to that City, the name of which is JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH. "The Lord is there," Ezek. xlviii. 35. And the prophet Zechariah brings in the saints of God rejoicing in the same things. Zech. viii. 20, 21, 22, "Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem: I will go also." The saints *of old* were wont to rejoice when

the Sabbath came, because of the heavenly and holy duties of that day. Opportunities and duties are always to be joined Gal. vi. 10. This is to "live according to the will of God." 1 Pet. iv. 2; and to "Walk circumspectly, redeeming the time," Eph. v. 15. 16.

2. When we are truly careful to make up former negligence with double diligence. Redeeming the time, we recover our lost time; which, according to this phrase, seemeth to be taken captive; and we must redeem it. Redemptions are made by purchase. To redeem a thing is to buy it for a price; the price we redeem it with is labour, travel, faithful and serious diligence, and greater activity and vigour in the prosecutions of our duty. When what of time or seriousness hath been wanting in one day or duty is made up and supplied in the next, this is the way to repair our soul-damages: "For the time past of our lives my suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles," 1 Pet. iv. 3. Christians, our sins have been many and mighty, but our services few and mean; therefore put the best leg before. Be not like the sluggard, like the *door upon* the hinges; but as the sun in the

heavens, that rejoiceth to run his race: "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." Prov. x. 4. I have heard of one who, being a prisoner in a dungeon, when the light was brought to him a little time to eat his diet, would pull out his Bible and read a chapter, saying, He could find his mouth in the dark, but he could not read in the dark. An argument that he made conscious of redeeming his time. Sirs, to be watchful, diligent, laborious in the faithful improvement of all your time, talents, gifts, graces, is the thing here intended. The precept is for labour, Luke xiii. 24, 2 Pet. i. 10. And the diligent in duty hath the promise of glory, Heb. xi. 6. "To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life," Rom. ii. 7.

2. What time must be redeemed?

Answ. All time. Time is so precious, that not any of it must be lost. The whole time of our life must be employed either about our souls, in the service of God, or in the works of our callings, or in order thereunto; particularly,

1. The time of youth. 2. The time of

health and strength. 3. The time of affliction. 4. The time of the gospel. 5. The time of the Sabbath, or Lord's Day, in special, must be redeemed.

1. The time of youth must be redeemed. The great GOD stands much upon priority to have the first and best; the first ripe fruits: the first that openeth the womb. O then offer the Isaac of thy youth, the spring and flower of thy age to God, and stay not until the evil day. Begin first with him from whom thou hadst thy being: go about the grand affair and work of thy dear and never-dying soul, before thou gulph thyself in the cares of this world. Resolve to present the first ripe fruits to that good and gracious God who desireth the first ripe fruits; in the bright morning of thy life match thyself to the King of glory, and become his bride before thou art deflowered and defiled by sin and the world. If the celestial seeds of grace be sown in the morning, the pleasant and sweet flowers springing out of these seeds will invite the Lord Jesus to come and walk in his garden, Can. v. 1. If thou wouldst be the temple of the Holy Ghost, let him that made the house be

the first and chief inhabitant, and suffer not thine heart to be an habitation for dragons and devils, which will be thy undoing to all eternity.

You young men and young women, know, that the infinitely gracious God holds out the golden sceptre, and inviteth you to come unto him. The ruddy David, the child Samuel, the young Timothy God calls, 1 Sam. i. 11, 12. 1 Sam. iii. 10. 1 Tim. iv. 12. And the sooner you come, the better it will be. Say then this instant, Behold we come! thine we are; thine we will be: Come now and take thine own. God will accept you and take it kindly. His arms and bosom is open to you, Jer. ii. 2. 3. "I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when the first fruits was holiness to the Lord." If you would have the respect and kindness of God, offer unto him the firstlings of the flock, Gen. iv. 4. viz. thy youthful days. If a company of aged, feeble persons, or cripples were tendered to the king for service, he would not accept them, 1 Sam. xiv. 52. Mal. i. 8, 13, 14. David from his youth, and Josiah while he was young, began to seek the Lord,

Psal. lxxi. 17. 2. Chron. xxxiv. 3. Young men, if you receive the seed of grace in the morning of your age, it will take the deeper root and impression upon your hearts, and cause you to bring forth fruit in old age. Cloth will keep colour best that is died in the wool; and the vessel will scent longest of that liquor with which it is first seasoned, Prov. xxii. 26. O then "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," Eccles. xii. 1.

2. The time of health and strength is to be improved. You that are now strong and lively must not expect to be so always: you as well as others must count upon diseases, sicknesses, weaknesses, which will confine you to your houses, chambers, and beds. Now, then, while your health and strength of body, and natural vigour is continued, be mindful of your work and time. The greatest duties and difficulties in heaven's way, are set forth by striving, wrestling fighting, running; which require the best of our time, and the most of our strength, Luke xii. 35, 36. 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. 1 Tim. vi. 12. Can a sick and weak man run so fast as to obtain, or so

strive and conflict, as to overcome? Judge ye. King Saul choose the strong and valiant for his service.—It is the strong must run the race, Psalm xix. 5. If a man had a business of great concernment, or matter of life and death, that requires time, strength, and diligence, for the doing of it, and should omit it until he were striken in years, or till sickness or weakness invade him, every one would be ready to charge him with folly. If a carrier, amongst many stout, strong horses, had one poor lame sick horse, and should lay the burden of the greatest weight and worth upon that poor weak creature, we would conclude, that either he was cruel, or that he wanted the understanding of a man. This is our case; the greatest affair of immortal souls requireth time, strength, diligence, and all little enough; and shall we charge the whole stress of our everlasting state upon a few days' sickness and weakness before our death? God forbid, Eccles. xii. 3, 4.

3. The time of affliction must be redeemed. Christians, "In the days of adversity we must consider," Eccles. vii. 14. It was the time of Jacob's trouble when the apostle ex-

horted believers to redeem the time: God speaks by his rod, as well as by his word, to both which we must have an ear. God sometimes teaches his people, as Gideon did the men of Succoth, "With thorns and briers of the wilderness," Judges viii. 7. Let the affliction be of what kind or degree soever, either upon our persons, estates, families, church, or kingdom, yea, and of long continuance, we are to look upon it as from God, and for our good; for every affliction speaks to us in the language of Ehud to Eglon, "I have a message unto thee from God." And God will reckon with us for the rods he lays upon us. I shall speak more to this in another place.

4. The time of the gospel must be redeemed. Gospel-time is our spiritual harvest; and it is notorious folly to sleep or loiter in harvest. The time of the gospel is a time indeed, viz. a time of light, a time of love, a time of life, a time of liberty. Matt. iv. 16. 2 Tim. i. 12. Ezek. xvi. 8. Rom. v. 8. Isa. lxi. 1. John vi. 6. Now the trumpet of Jubilee soundeth, and all debts and mortgages may be taken up and released. Here is "Liberty for the poor captives, and the opening of the

prison to them that are bound." It is "Now an accepted time, a day of salvation," 2 Corvi. 2. A time to accept, or a time to be accepted; a golden and glorious time indeed! Behold, now there is a broad and clear way to his mercy-seat! the flaming sword is gone, the partition-wall is down, and all bars and gates are removed; an act of Indemnity is proclaimed, and there is a free admission for all to come and be saved: pardons are ready, Isa. lv. 5, 7. Sinners, your dear Lord Jesus, the great Peacemaker, is now an importunate suitor unto your perishing souls, namely, an inviting, knocking, waiting, promising Christ, Prov. i. 22. and ix. 4. Isa. lxv. 2. Matt. xi. 28. Rev. iii. 20. Cant. v. 2. John vi. 35. The treasures of grace are opened, and offered to sale upon easy terms, "Without money, and without price," Isa. lv. 1. Rev. iii. 18. O make speed and come; make the purchase, buy the pearl of great price, that is better than rubies, and you shall have a treasure in heaven. The favour of God, precious blood, white raiment, tried gold, and the eternal life of your never dying souls, is worth the having. Consider also, that now the

Holy Ghost calls and offers his assistance to close the bargain, to tie the marriage-knot between Christ and your souls, Heb. iii. 7. If you lose this opportunity, you may never have the like; "The Spirit and the Bride saith, Come," Rev. xxii. 17.

5. The time of the Sabbath or LORD'S Day must be redeemed. We must have a special care of sanctifying that day, it being the Sabbath of the Lord our God. The golden day from morning to night, must he spent in the service and worship of our Lord, either in public, private, or secret duties; and no part of it must be lost. Take no liberty upon that day for frothy, vain, and unprofitable discourse or recreations, or to ride, buy, sell, or work. The youth that was lately hanged for murdering his fellow-servant, confessed that his Sabbath-breaking made way for all his other prodigious sins. This dreadful, God provoking sin of Sabbath-breaking, is a sin in fashion; hundreds in this nation serve the devil more upon the Lord's Day than any other days. Then men are at leisure to serve the devil, and satisfy their lusts; and go to the ale-house, or to exercise themselves in

sports, and pastimes. O that magistrates, ministers, masters of families, and parents, would look to it! Neh. xiii. 19. "The Lord of the Sabbath commandeth thee, that thou and thy son, thy daughter, thy man-servant, and all within thy gates keep that day holy." The Sabbath is called, "*A holy convocation.*" Lev. xxiii. 3. "and the Lord of the day is an infnitely holy, just, and jealous God." The Sabbath, heretofore, was called the Queen of days; in the New Testament it is called "*the Lord's Day,*" Rev. i. 10.—a day on which we commemorate the greatest mercy, viz. the glorious resurrection of our crucified Lord; and that which the purest Christians in the purest times did carefully observe. In the primitive times, a serious and strict observation of the LORD'S Day was a trial or badge of Christianity; when the question was propounded, Hast thou kept the LORD'S Day? The answer was, I am a Christian, and cannot intermit it. It was a saying of an eminent Divine that he could judge of a man's religion, according to the reverence and care he had in keeping the Sabbath. *Christians* you are to keep your

Lord's rest, and perform the holy duties of hi worhip, cheerfully, reverently, spiritually, Joh v. 24. If ever you think to celebrate a eternal Sabbath with God in glory, be carefu of this duty. And, to enforce it, consider,

1. How stricty the holy God imposeth it and to what end it is: "*Remember the Sab bath day to keep it holy*," Exod. xx. 8. Thi blessed day for communion with God, is to b premeditated upon before it cometh; therefore in the evening before the Sabbath, let all you necessary occasions be done up, that you ma have nothing to do but what becometh th work of that day. Be like David's good man Psal. cxii. 5, ordering your affairs with discre tion, especially your spiritual affairs. If yo expected the company of some worthy friend would you be found in a sluttish posture, o sweeping and cleansing your houses on tha day, and all out of order? On the Lord' Day you should vehemently expect the ap proach and presence of the King of glory therefore make all ready to entertain him.

2. Remember the excellent epithets an titles of this blessed day: It is called "A hig *day,* a holy day, the holy of the Lord, honou

able," Isa. lviii. 13. Therefore let it be redeemed—lose no more Sabbaths.

3. Consider the blessings and soul-benefits of that day, if it be rightly observed It is your Lord's market-day, in the which you have the precious oil, the golden mines, and treasures of grace opened that day. There are spiritual dainties for your hungry souls, to which you are by Christ invited that day, Isa. lv. 1. The Holy Ghost doth breathe and blow that day, by the secret and sweet gales whereof saints mount towards heaven. The great God comes down, and gracious souls ascend that day, Rev. i. 10. And the eunuchs that keep GOD'S Sabbath, have the promise of a name in his house for ever, Isa. lvi. 4, 5. I might add the severe threatenings and God's singular judgments upon the profaners of the Sabbath, or LORD'S Day. The man that was found gathering sticks upon the Sabbath-day, by an immediate command from God, was stoned to death, Numb. xv. 32, 34, 35, 36.

How Time must be redeemed.

1. By taking and improving all opportunities for the glorifying of God.

2. By laying hold on the present time, and now day of grace, for settling and securing your everlasting state.

3. By improving the present means of grace, for your speedy growth in grace.

4. By doing all the good you can to others, while you may.

5. By labouring to keep up constant communion with God in holy duties.

6. By improving every providence and outward cross, for inward and spiritual advantages.

7. By casting up your accounts every day, that you may know how matters stand betwixt you and God.

8. By labouring to order every day's work in reference to your last day, that having finished your work, you may be fit to leave this world.

1. By taking and improving all occasions for the glorifying of God. Dear Christians, this is your Father's buisness, and the great errand for which you had your being. You were born, and new-born, to serve the interest of the holy and blessed God in the world; this is that glorious end for which you should

spend your time and strength, and lay out yourselves to the very utmost. That which is the chief end of your life, viz. to display and propagate God's glory in the world, must not be neglected; other things are infinitely inferior, and must be subordinate unto this: for the thonghts and designs of serving the interest of your Lord, is that which you must be always driving on in this world. God expects it. "Thou shalt have no other god's before me," Exod. xx. 3. God will be exalted in the heart, and in our life too: "I will be glorified, saith the Lord, before all the people," Lev. x. 3. One way or other the great Creator will have the glory by all his creatures. "God made all things for himself;" the world, to be a visible and wonderful declaration of his excellent glory; so that it is due debt, Psalm. xix. 1, 2. Psalm xciv. 8. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name." To walk with God in our whole course, to design his glory, is the prime mark of our saintship and sincerity. This is the white in the mark we should aim at—the thing we should pursue resolutely, vigorously, with all our might.—Whether we pray, or

preach, or read, or hear, or celebrate Sabbaths, or converse, exhort, or reprove, or indeed buy, sell, plough, sow, reap, eat or drink, let it not be done for the world, or the interest of the flesh. We should have such a high esteem of God, and such strong desires, and such strong affections to him, that the pleasing, praising, and magnifying of God in all our ways, might be our main endeavour.

Christians, you are chosen out of the world to be God's witnesses; if you do not appear for God, his honour and interest, none will: *All*, saith the holy apostle, *seek their own.* Philip. ii. 21. But you are to deny, and keep under self, which is directly opposite to the honour of your God. Wicked men are bold and resolute in the way of sin, to bear up the interest of the Prince of darkness; and will not you be as active for the interest of your Lord? The martyrs would rather die than dishonour God, who burning with zeal to God's glory, would glorify him in the very fire. God hath made you honourable, Isaiah xlii. 4, being kings and priests: and enrolled you amongst the first-born that are written in heaven. You have a place in his heart, and a name in his

house; you are vessels of honour, and shall be honoured, *That we might be to the glory of his grace.* Your everlasting Father hath marked you and set his stamp and seal upon you, and put a principle of life within you, that ye might love him and live unto him. The man that refused to bear up his deceased brother's name, Deut. xxv. 9, was to have his face spit on in the face of the congregation; but shame and everlasting contempt will be upon their faces, that will not stand up for the honour of the holy God, Dan. xii. 2. Christians, it is sin that reflects dishonour upon God's name, therefore allow it not in yourselves, and prevent it what you can in others. Remember your time, and redeem God's glory: your days are evil, and you have but a few days for this work; do it, and God will own you and advance you to a kingdom.

Beloved in the Lord, though you differ in other things, agree in this, to glorify God on earth, "That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God," Rom. xv. 6. Every one that is godly crying out with holy David, Psal. xxxiv. 3, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together," 1 Cor.

x. 32. John iii. 14. Phil. iii. 15. "As many as are perfect will be thus minded."

2. By laying hold upon the present time, or now day of grace, for the settling and securing your everlasting state, or blessed eternity. Your souls' concerns are the greatest, yea, of infinite moment; and the things of eternity claim a superiority. If you propose to do your souls good, you must first seek the kingdom of God, Matth. vi. 33, and take the kingdom of heaven with violence, Matth. xii. 12. "Let me die the death of the righteous," or "Lord have mercy on me," when you come to die, will not do, Numb. xxiii. 10. Matth. xxv. 11. And know, sinner, it must be done in this thy day, now or never, Luke x. 42. While the door of grace is open, before the bridge be drawn and mercy gone, this must be done, Isa. lv. 6.

1. By complying with the present call of the gospel in closing immediately with Jesus Christ, and in giving and resigning themselves wholly unto him. This is that one thing necessary, that must be done speedily, to secure your souls, to provide for their everlasting welfare.—Therefore, do not procrastinate or de-

lay it for a world. It is thy grand affair that must make thee, or mar thee to eternity: "He that believes not is condemned already," John iii. 36. John viii. 24. John i. 12. If you do not now embrace the Lord Jesus, upon the great and glorious terms of the gospel, you will as certainly be damned as if you were in hell amongst the devils already, 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. Heb. ii. 3, 18. You that want Christ, will you welcome Christ, saying with thy soul, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, Enter, thou King of glory, Psal. xxiv. 7. Thine is the kingdom, take the throne, sit upon the chiefest chariot, take up thy lodging in my heart for ever, and suffer not the dead child to lie in the place of the living child; and a dead world, and damnable lusts, where my Lord should lodge. O blessed day, and happy hour, in which the Heir of heaven and perishing sinners meet, and are married! Here is a match for you; will you renounce all others, sin, the devil, and carnal companions, and join yourself to the Prince of life? Speak the word, and the work is done; open the door, and he will certainly come in, and take up his abode for ever: "All that the Father hath given

him shall come unto him; and him that cometh he will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37. Rev. iii. 20. Isa. xxvi. 13. Isa. xliv. 5. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Acts xvi. 30.

2. By repenting without delay. This is the second great work, in which you must make speed; for until this be done, you are in danger every moment of dropping down to hell! Remember the sad story of the woman who, when her house was on fire, had her child burned while she was saving some of her goods. Sinners, your danger is great, your opportunities are flying—fly you as fast. Let me say to thee, as the angel to Lot, Gen. xix. 16, 17, when in danger of being burned. "Escape for thy life! stay not, lest thou be consumed." The life and salvation of thy soul cannot be secured without this, Acts xi. 18. 2 Cor. vii. 10. Luke xiii. 3. Therefore endeavour to know the plague of thy heart, 1 Kings viii. 38, and plough up the fallow-ground; sow in tears, and set about it this instant, before this day be ended, this sermon ended, lest it should be said of thee, as of that woman Jezebel, Rev. ii. 20, "I gave her space to repent, and she repented not." "And so God's fury come

forth like fire, and burn, that none can quench it," Jer. iv. 3, 4.

3. By making it your great business to secure an interest in Christ, getting your evidences for heaven bright and clear. Christians, till you have gotten the pledges and tokens of God's love to your souls—till you are assured of the truth of your faith, and the sincerity of your repentance, and hereby of the pardon of sin, and your interest in the Lord Jesus, you can have little comfort in your souls, or boldness toward God. Therefore, with might and main, work out your salvation. Phil. ii. 12, "Make your calling and election sure," that upon certain grounds you may say as the Church, Lam. iii. 24, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. Doubtless thou art our Father," Isa. lxiii. 16. Or as holy Job, in his deep affliction, Job xix. 25. "I know that my Redeemer liveth. I am thine, save me," Psal. cxix. 94. "Truly I am thy servant. I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine," Cant. ii. 16. Christians, this assuring faith is attainable; pray for it, and vigorously press after it, that you may be *sealed up unto* the day of redemption,

that so an entrance may be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. i. 10, 11. And O how well have they redeemed their precious time that have secured their never-dying souls! Know this, that assurance requires both diligence and perseverance; therefore you must be constant in the use of means, and lay hold of every opportunity of enjoying the gospel. This our Lord commendeth in Mary, calling her attendance on the word preached as "Choosing the good part," Luke x. 42. There you will taste the crystal streams, and view the golden mines of sound doctrine, and wells of salvation. This is the place of spiritual wonders! where the dead are raised, the lepers cleansed, the eyes of the blind opened, and the devils ejected. Gospel-ordinances are the golden galleries where the King of glory walketh—the bed where immortal souls are begotten unto God, and in which the broken hearts do travel till Christ be formed in them. Through these golden pipes the water of life is poured out upon thirsty panting souls, for the cheering of their *spirits.* *Here* is the doctrine preached, and

the words whereby thou must be saved, Acts x. 6. Here Christ's mother found him, it being the place where the Bridegroom and the Bride meet and solace themselves together. Do not forsake the solemn assemblies; remember what Thomas lost by being absent when Christ came. O come to the posts of Wisdom's doors, and with empty pitchers set yourselves under the spouts of the Sanctuary. It is upon these waters the angel moves, and souls are healed. This is the school where all God's children are taught of God, and instructed unto the kingdom of God.

4. By improving the present means of grace, for your speedy growth in grace; that so the grain of mustard-seed may become a great tree, Mat. xiii. 31, 32. The Christian's course is compared to a race, a walk, to the morning light, 1 Cor. ix. 24, Rom. vii. 1. And therefore you must go on, and be progressive whilst you live. Believers should be as greedy of grace as the men of the world are of gain; because one grain of grace is of more worth than a house full of gold; yea, better than rubies. You are compared to stars, to fruitful *trees, planted* by the rivers of water;

and you should glister and shine in this dark night of helish profaneness, and live down, and convince this debauched generation. The trees of the Lord should be full of sap, Psal. civ. 16. Being grafted into the true olive, and under the sweet dews of Heaven, you should flourish in the courts of the Lord, and bring forth fruit in old age, Psal. xcii. 13, 14. Christians, keep your lamps burning, and hold on your way, that the day of grace may wax stronger and stronger. Make no stop, but strive to get and keep before, that you may win the prize. Growth in grace is required of the highest giant, as well as of the lowest dwarf in grace. They say of the crocodile, that he groweth as long as he liveth, and when he ceaseth to grow he ceaseth to live. How many poor creeping Christians are there who can hardly keep life and soul together, being like the door upon the hinges, Prov. xxii. 14. And why, but because they are come to a pitch, and past growth, as soon as sprung up above ground. If there be the truth of grace there will be an endeavour after the strength of grace: where there is life there is growth, *1 Pet. ii. 2.* 'The path of the just is as the shin-

ing light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. Sirs, up and be doing—press towards the mark: "Add to your faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience, to patience, godliness; that ye be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Be ye, therefore, stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. And if you do these things, you shall never fall," 1 Cor. xv. 58. 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8.

5. By doing all the good we can to others, while we have opportunity. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men." Hereby we do imitate that character of the divine Goodness, Psalm cxix. 68. "Thou art good, and doest good. Let every one please his neighbour for his good to edification," Rom. xv. 2. These four ways we must do good to others:

1. This must be done especially in your families, to them that are more immediately under your charge, and for whom you must shortly give an account to the dreadful Judge of quick and dead. If Christ be come to thy

heart, let religion be set up in thy house without delay.—If thou art really gracious, be relatively good, seeking the profit of many, that they may be saved, 1. Cor. x. 33. Sirs, if you would not be guilty of soul-blood, soul-murder, resolve to set up the worship of God in your families, and let family-work stoop to family worship. Endeavour to teach thy children and servants to know, obey, and serve the Lord, who is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. If you are the children of faithful Abraham, do as he did, and walk in his path, John viii. 39. The holy, heart-searching God witnesseth of Abraham, Genesis xviii. 19. "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord."—It is a great trust to have the charge and trust of souls; therefore let not your children and servants live as they list, but command them out of the way of sin, which will certainly bring them to hell. O that parents and masters of families would take up holy Joshua's resolution, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," Josh. xxiv. 15. But on the contrary, many seem,

as it were, to have banished God and the practice of piety out of their houses, as if parents and childern, masters and servants, were resolved to serve the devil, and go to hell, John viii. 44. The neglect of family-duties is a dreadful and provoking sin, and that (as a godly minister said) which will untile the house, and cause God reign curses upon the table. Read and tremble at the Prophet's imprecation, Jer. x. 25, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, that know thee not; and upon the families that call not upon thy name." How many prayerless husbands do give occasion to their wives to say to them, as Zipporah to Moses, Exodus iv. 25, "A bloody husband art thou to me." Your wives, children, and servants, will sadly bewail it, and cry out, living or dying, O that ever we were married to such husbands, born of such parnents, bound to such masters, that had no regard to serve God, or care of souls. If you are Christians indeed, let a constant course of reading the word, catechising, and prayer, be kept up in your houses; for when death hath separated you and your relations, it will grieve you to the heart that you did

not more to farther the good of their precious souls, Acts x. 29, 30.

2. By taking all occasions, wherever you are, to further the conversion of perishing sinners. If you have tested that the Lord is gracious, and are taken out of the iron furnace, as firebrands out of the burniug, where, where is your pity and bowels to souls in peril? Can you be contented and happy to go to heaven alone, and not endeavour, by your prayers, counsels, and examples, to persuade and draw others into heaven's way? Jude 22. Wicked men are active for the devil, who, like snails, leave their slime behind them wherever they come, and are emptying the poison of sin into the other, and so furthering their damnation. What multitudes do you see weltering in their blood, and making post haste to hell, whose desperate and deplorable case should excite your compasion, to speak a word in season for their salvation! Your dear Lord, whom you should imitate, "Went about doing good," Acts x. 38. He improved his opportunity to convert a notorious sinner, John iv. Though weary and thirsty, was not careful of hasting to meat, because he pre-

ferred the opportunity to bring her soul out of Satan's snare, and to save her. When at your tables, or buying, or selling, or travelling, opportunity may be taken to speak of God, and the things of God, and to leave some conviction upon the company. Thus Philip, falling in with the Eunuch, whilst he was riding on his way homewards from Jerusalem, closed with him, and was an instrument to save the soul of him he never saw before, Acts viii. 26, 40. And by the heavenly discourse of Mr. Carter, Pastor of Brainford in Suffolk, a gentlewoman was converted while she was waiting upon him in his chamber. A word spoken in season, through God's blessing, may save a soul, and it is our duty to endeavour it. Mr. Ignatius Jordan of Exter was exceedingly instrumental in this way, who would go from house to house to put his neighbours in mind of their soul's concern. Holy David was not afraid or ashamed to speak of God before kings, and to tell what God had done for his soul: And said he, "I will teach transgressors thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee," Psalm li. 13. For "He that converteth a

sinner from the evil of his way, saveth a soul from death," James v. 20.—When at any time your neighbours are sick, and under the hand of God, take that opportunity to visit them and put them in mind of death and judgment, and to make them sensible of the necessity of faith and repentance, without which there can be no hope of heaven. Our proverb is, "To strike while the iron is hot." Upon a bed of languishing, when death looks men in the face, they seem serious and fit to receive the impression of faithful counsel for their souls. To which join serious prayer, for "The prayer of faith," saith the apostle, "shall save the sick," and may save thy soul.

3. By provoking and encouraging our fellow-brethren in the way to heaven. We must "Exhort one another daily while it is called to-day," Heb. iii. 13. And "Provoke one another unto love, and to good works, and so much the more as we see the day approaching," Heb. x. 24. Wicked men, and the children of the devil, have their "Go with us," and do stir up one another in the way to hell; and shall not saints edify and build up one another in their most holy faith? Rom. xiv. 15, 19.

1 John v. 11. Eph. iv. 29. 1 Cor. xiv. 26, Jude 20. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another," Malachi iii. 16. Christians ought and should spend that time in serious and profitable discourse, which others waste and spend in idle and vain discourse. Say with the man after God's own heart, "Come, all you that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." That which you have seen and heard, you must declare one to another, 1 John i. 3. Hereby be helping forward towards heaven, and comforting one another by the comfort wherewith yourselves are comforted of God, 2 Cor. i. 4. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," Luke xxii. 32.

4. We must do good to others, by distributing to their outward wants and necessities; and thereby lay up a treasure in heaven, before our treasure on earth fail, and we lose both, Matth. xix. 21. This is to honour the Lord with our substance, Prov. iii. 9. This is to make friends with the unrighteous mammon, and to provide yourselves bags which was not old, a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not, Luke xii. 33. This duty must not

be forgotten, because it is a sowing of seed, Heb. xiii. 16. 2 Cor. ix. 6.; and it will spring, and bring forth a crop, or harvest, in this or the other world, Eccles. xi. 1. 6. God will not forget it, Heb. vi. 10. The Lord Jesus will certainly reward it, Matth. xxv. 40. A "well done" from Christ hereafter will compensate all the service of well doers here, Matth. xxv. 21.

5. By labouring to keep up constant communion with God in all holy duties. Christians, you may lose time in the very service of God, if you are not careful therein to converse with him. Take heed of a light spirit in serious performances. God looks upon the heart, and most there. Some serious preparations are necessary, before you approach to the presence of the high and holy God. Joseph shaved himself before he would come into Pharaoh's presence. Let your heaven-born souls, in every duty, with the love sick spouse, go out to meet your Lord; and take up with nothing else. 'Tis not the picture of the husband, but the presence of the husband, that can satisfy the true loving, longing spouse. It is a blessed sight to see souls working to-

wards God—gasping and panting after the Lord Jesus Christ, Psal. xlii. 1, 2. O labour for such a frame of heart, and bewail a narrow and contracted spirit. Do not perform duties for duty's sake; but as the medium, by which thy soul may draw nigh to God, and meet with him. The countenance and presence of God in a duty, is the very suburbs of glory, yea, the very gate of heaven, Gen. xxviii. 17. Let this be in thy thoughts and the very purpose of thy heart, and expect it vehemently, in every access to God. Let thy soul follow hard after God, and say, "One thing have I desired of the Lord that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, Psal xxvii. 4. Psal. lxxxiv. 2. Duties are only the outward court, but the form shell, and carcase of religion: as pipes without water; breasts without milk; as sails without wind; or as a body without a soul that hath no life. The increase of your grace and holiness depends upon your acquaintance and communion with the God of grace. It was Moses, being on the mount that made his face to shine; and the king's being at the table that caused the church's *spikenard* to send forth the smell

thereof, Cant. i. 12. The presence of the glorious God on a Sabbath—the presence of God in prayer, or at a sacrament, will be unto thy soul as marrow and fatness, and that which will make thy hands to drop with myrrh, and thy fingers with sweet smelling myrrh. Thus it was with the spouse, when her beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, Cant. v. 4, 5.

6. By improving every providence, every comfort, every cross of God's glory, and our own spiritual advantage. God doth nothing in vain; for he hath a peculiar respect unto the good of his people in all his dispensations; he doth time and measure, and order every hard and afflicting providence for his church's advantage Jer. xxiv. 5, Rom. viii. 28, Heb. xii. 10, 11. God' chastening and teaching commonly go together, therefore it is, we must bear the rod, and who hath appointed it, Micah vi. 9. The rod hath a voice; beasts may feel the rod, but the beliver hears the rod. God's rod should make us like Aaron's rod, bud, blossom, and to bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, Heb. xii. 11. Now if you would be bettered by affliction, endeavour to do three things.

1. To understand the meaning, or mind of

God in them—for what sins committed, or duties, neglected, they are sent: afflictions are God's messengers, and we should never be at quiet till we know their errand, Job. x. 2.

2. See the hand of God in all these afflictions. So did David, Psal. xxxix. 10. And holy Job, Chap. i. 21. Hos. vi. 1.

3. Labour to answer the end of God in your straits and troubles, that you might be made more humble, more holy, more heavenly than before; that we may say and find, that it hath been good for us to be afflicted. We have as much reason to seek unto God for a blessing upon our daily rod, as upon our daily bread.

4. Time must be redeemed, by casting up your accounts every day, and so to make even with God, and not to get further into his debt. This will be the way to get acquaintance, to procure a pardon, before you are called and forced to an account. Secret duties, if well done, are the sweetest duties, and yet sadly neglected by saints themselves. You should retire every night, and spend a little time in self-examination; and when you sit alone, commune with your hearts, and call over the

passages and actions of the day past. We read, Gen. xxiv. 63, that Isaac went out in the evening-tide to meditate; a precious duty, but rarely practised. Christians should spend void spaces of time in ejaculatory prayer and holy meditation. And O how hard it is to ascend the mount of heavenly meditation! It is very easy and delightsome to think of the world, the pleasures of sin, friends, riches, worldly business; but to meditate on God, heaven, eternity, the insufficiency and vanity of the creature, the bitterness of sin and certainty of death and judgment (the very inwards of religion), is very difficult. Before you lie down upon your beds at night, call yourselves to an account by such questions as those:

1. I have lived many years in the world, what have I been doing all my days? Have I answered the end of my being?

2. Have I had a holy awe of God in the midst of my worldly business this day? What thoughts of death and judgment have I had? What hath my heart been?

3. How have I performed duties this day? What have been the sins of this day, the

mercies of this day, that I may beg the pardon of the one and bless God for the other?

4. What assistance and communion with God have I had this day, in the duties of his worship? Have not God and my soul been strangers this day, and many days together?

5. What have I done or spoken for God and his glory this day in my family, or else where? Have I demeaned myself like a child of God this day? This is to make religion our business, or to walk in the fear of the Lord all the day.

6. Improve your time, by endeavouring to order every day's work with reference to your last day. The end of every duty, and the great season of redeeming time, lies here; namely, that we may be fit to die, and stand before God. Therefore must we glorify the infinite holy God, and make him our friend. Hence it is, that we must secure our souls, and speedily get into Jesus Christ, and grow in grace, do good to others, call on ourselves to an account, and clear our title unto heaven, that all our work may be done while it is day, and none left to do, let death call when it will.

The reasons why our precious time must be redeemed are,

1. Because the days are evil.

2. Because it is a considerable part of our Christian wisdom.

Reason 1. Because the days are evil. This is the apostle's argument to enforce the duty; precious time and evil days run parallel, therefore no part of a little time must be lost. I shall instance in a few particulars to make it appear.

1. The tares of false doctrine, or diabolical, blasphemous, damnable opinions, do abound How do the devil's agents endeavour to raze and undermine the very foundations and principles of the Christian faith! Those old damnable heresies that have been condemned and expunged out of the church of God, are greedily embraced and swallowed down by more than a few, 2 Tim. iii. 1. and iv. iii. 2 Pet ii. 2. "Ye therefore, beloved seeing you know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your steadfastness," 2 Pet. iii. 17. 2 Tim. i. 13.

2. Men's flagitious lives, and most pro-

digious sins, make the day still evil. What execrable abominations are there commited upon the stage of this world? Iniquity abounds, wickedness is in credit, and religion under disgrace; many hate the power of godliness, but are not ashamed to wear the devil's livery. May we not complain with the prophet and say, as Hosea iv. 1, 2 "There is no truth, nor mercy,nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying and killing, and stealing, and commiting adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood; therefore shall the land mourn." And as Isaiah lix. 12, 15, "For our transgressons are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us; and truth faileth, and he that departeth from iniquity, maketh himself a prey."—And Amos v. 10, 12, 15, "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate—it is an evil time."

3. Many are backslidden, and apostatize. "How are the mighty fallen?" The falling sickness hath been epidemical disease, Matth. xxiv. 12. "Because iniquity abounds, the love of many shall wax cold," Jer. ii. 2. 2 Tim. i. 15. Rev. ii. 4.

4. Doth not God frown, and threaten to remove the candlestick, and leave us in darkness? Rev. ii. 5. Amos viii. 9, 11.

5. How is the family of God and friends of Christ divided and subdivided, one from another? Moab and Ammon, Herod and Pilate, can unite against Christ and his interest, when Christ's little flock are at a distance one unto the other, 1 Cor. v. 3, 4. And when it thus comes to pass, the days are evil, and our time had need to be redeemed.

Reason 2. Redeeming the time will render us truly wise. " See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time," Eph. v. 15. Eccles. vi. 4. The wise man's heart (saith Solomon) discerneth both time and judgment. To work while it is day, and to do a great deal of work in a little time, commendeth the wisdom of the agent. Whatever learning, parts, endowments, men have, they are not wise, unless they redeem the time. The men of Issachar were of great account with David, because they had understanding of the time, to know what Israel ought to do, 1 Chron. xii. 32. The wise God, in whose hands is our time, takes the

Jews for fools for not observing the time, Jer. viii. 7. 8. And so doth our Lord Jesus the Pharisees, Matt. xvi. 2, 3. Therefore redeeming of time is called a walking in wisdom, as the apostle expresseth it, Col. iv. 5.

The Application.

Use. 1. First, if time must be redeemed, we must infer, that sure then there is an eternity. Let all the wasters of time count upon it; it is as certain as any thing in this world, that there is another world. You may venture your lives, your souls, and all upon the truth of it. Why should the blessed apostle Paul press believers so strictly to redeem time, but in order to their everlasting welfare? Assure thyself of it, and believe it as firmly, as if both eternities did now present themselves to thy bodily eyes, and thou didst see the devils and reprobates in their chains of darkness, and hear them cry and roar in those eternal flames: and also see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the saints departed, upon the throne, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. This is that which is neither belived or feared by the best and worst of men: O that it might have a deep *and lasting impression* upon all your hearts.

2. The opportunity of time is a very precious privilege. To have a gale of opportunity to convoy us to glory, or the white flag upon the wall, inviting us unto our work, to sue out our pardon before it is too late. Time is a rich invaluable treasure, and yet a transient treasure.

Time (God's post) runs apace; yea, flies as it were, upon eagles' wings, and will be gone. Time is compared to golden sands, running between two eternities; and it is an infinite mercy they are still running, that you have a day to work out your salvation, to agree with the adversary while he is in the way, viz., To make up the breach between God and your soul, Rev. ii. 21. The continuance of time is very uncertain—the time is short, 1 Cor. vii. 29. The whole is but a span, a very little space. It is but a few days more, and then thy departing hour; a few breathings more, and then thy last breath.

3. Time, as precious as it is, and which should be redeemed at any rate, is often let slip. What shall we do to pass away the time? is common in some men's mouths; it is a commodity that lies upon their hands—

they know not what to do with it—How profuse and prodigal are most of this great treasure, who make no improvement of it! How often hath opportunity come to us, and waited on us, but very few are found to lay hold upon it! To how many time wasters may that killing text be applied, Luke xix. 41, 42, "And when he came near, he beheld the city, and wept;" he could not speak it without tears. If thou hadst known (even thou at least) in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.

4. Spiritual sloth, whereby we lose so much of precious time, it is a sore evil, and very dangerous. Slothfulness (saith Solomon) casteth into a deep sleep, Prov. xix. 15. "The slothful man is like the door upon the hinges," Prov. xxvi. 14. "The slothful is brother to the great waster," Prov. xviii. 9. "Therefore be not slothful," Rom. xii. 11, Heb. vi. 12. We read that Joshua said to the sun, "stand still," but God never said to the soul, stand still. Religion requires action, labour, diligence; for it doth not consist in ary, empty notions, and speculations of the head,

but in the exercise of the mind and heart. Habits must be exerted, grace improved, heaven (that is all up hill) must be strived for, and gotten as it were by force and victory. It is a shameful and deformed sight to see a man professing godliness in a lethargy, and not prosecuting his duty. Cast off thy lazy and dull spirit and temper, lest thou be found that wicked, slothful, and unprofitable servant, who must be cast into utter darkness, Matth. xxv. 26, 30. Let me say to them as the Danites to their brethren, having spied out a good land, Judges xviii. 9, "Are ye still? arise, and be not slothful to go, and possess the land." The heavenly country is before you; arise and work, and lose it not for want of labour. Let not spiritual sloth, by eating out your time, hinder your work, and rob you of your wages, Rev. iii. 11

3. If the best of saints should redeem their time, what have sinners need to do? you that have been slumbering and sleeping all your time, and not gone one step in the way to heaven, but many in the way to hell, had need up and be doing, or else you will be eternally undone: "Whilst it is called to-day,

if you would hear his voice, harden not your hearts;" do not spend so freely of this swift and precious stream of time, every drop of which hath an influence upon eternity. "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. The night is far spent the day is at hand! cast off, therefore, the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light." "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkeness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," Rom. xiii. 12, 13, 14.

6. If time, and every part and moment of it, must be improved, this serves to confute those that reproach serious diligence in duty as a needless thing. If the buisness of our immortal souls did not require great care and diligence, why doth Paul here enjoin us to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise?" Christians, it is your wisdom to know your work, and the time to do it. There is no trifling about eternity; now is the day for the things of your peace—let it not be hid from your eyes. It will be very sad, when

you are passing into the other world, to see that you have all your lifetime been sowing the wind.

Use 2. Examination. Try whether you are redeemers of the time or no.

Reflect upon what I have said, and thy conscience will tell thee that thou hast spent most of thy time in sin and vanity. How fruitful are thy duties? Are thy hours for God? Do time and duty go hand-in-hand? Mayest thou not cry out many a time, *Diem perdidi!* Daily I lose a day. Examine yourselves—do not silence or stop the mouth of concience; if so, it will cry aloud another day.

Let me ask you these few questions.

1. Have you seriously bewailed the loss of time, and begged the pardon of it?

2. Have your souls sincerely closed with Jesus Christ—freely and fully given up and resigned yourselves to him, to be his for ever?

3. Doth the great concerns of God's glory and your salvation bear down all before them? Canst thou say, Though I follow my calling, and take care for my family, yet I *am* most solicitous about my everlasting

condition? Whether they be pleasures or profits, can I say, pleasures of sin, begone—world, stand by? There is a God to serve and honour—I have a soul must be sanctified and saved—I have a short time to redeem—I have a debt to pay—an account to give—a sentence to receive—an eternity to live. This is not to be slighted—I must and will save my soul—hell is most intolerable and eternal.

4. Will you now promise, and stand to it, that for the future you will tread more for eternity, and get better evidences for heaven? Go about the work of faith and repentance speedily, lest death should call, and you not ready.

Use 3. Of lamentation. That professors should be so far from redeeming of time, or of doubling their diligence, that they neglect their duty. I may cry out with the prophet, call for the mourning women, for who is not guilty in this kind? Amos v. 16. Sirs, for this should our souls morn in secret places; the serious consideration of which is enough to fetch blood from our hearts, and floods of tears from our eyes. How little care is taken in spending *that well*, which when it is gone,

we have no hope it can be restord to us again! Do you not complain of the want of time, seeing you waste time? There are many poor, frivolous excuses; the servant will say that he hath an hard, cruel master, the wife complains of her wicked husband, the child of his ungodly father; another of the poverty of his family—he can spare no time.—Whoever pretends the want of time, let me tell thee thou hast a carnal, dead, sinful, slothful heart, the cause of all. Hast thou not time for every other thing, namely, a time for eating, drinking, sleeping, potting, piping, playing, and none for heaven? Can you rise early, and go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulness, to get the meat that perisheth, and find no time for God and your souls? Will this excuse thee another day, the careless, ignorant, deluded soul? Your corn, cattle, your sheep, your swine, your hawks, your horses, and dogs, are cared for; but for the better part there is no care at all. Wilt thou tell the great and terrible Judge at the last day, I would have been saved, but I had no time? There are many that eat their bread by the sweat of their brows, that

make time for their souls, who will be brought in as witnesses against you at the last day. Will you squander away your time, and the days evil, and opportunity for your souls hardly come at? O consider it is high time to awake out of sleep.

Exhortation to redeem Time.

Use 4. You have heard what it is to redeem time, and how time must be redeemed. Now, let all resolve, without delay, to put this so necessary a duty into practice. Let young ones resolve upon it, and the middle aged, with the hoary heads. Tender unto God the cream and flower of thy age and time, and think it not too soon. In things of far less moment you are for haste and speed. If you were starving for the want of bread you would think every hour long till you had a supply. If your bodies were tortured and tormented with pain and sickness, would you think that ease and health might come too soon? If a man were in the sea near sinking, can a boat come too soon? Or can a condemned malefactor have his pardon too soon; Hast thou lived without God, and Satan's

slave, and in danger of dropping into hell fifteen or twenty years, and canst thou get into Christ to secure thy immortal soul too soon? Hast thou not been the devil's too long already? Suppose thou hadst died in thy Christless state, where had thy soul been? Is it not better to be the Lord's servant than Satan's slave? Ask the godly man that hath made trial, and he will tell thee, the sooner thou art in a state of grace the fitter thou wilt be for glory. Make speed in thy work to do thy spiritual business; thy wages are sure, and thou shalt be blessed. Consider there was never any one repented (living or dying) that they were the Lord's and converted betimes.

And for you that have passed the time of youth in the satisfying youthful lusts, and lived, it may be thirty, forty, or fifty years in the course of sin and vanity, is it not more than time for you to bethink yourselves? In so many years you have made sad work; who can tell how often you have offended, that have been profane swearers, drunkards, liars, Sabbath-breakers so long! If you were certain of having so many years to come, yet

the devil, the world, and your hellish lusts have had half your time. O let the time past suffice; know your times are in God's hands, Psal. xxxi. 15. So that you are not certain of a day to come; therefore begin and make good speed in your work.

And for the grey-headed, against whom death hath raised his batteries, you can have but a few sands in your glass—your departing hour cannot be far—your candle is within the socket, and it may be is come to a stinking snuff. Do you not see the keepers of the old rotten house begin to tremble, and the strong men bow themselves? Expect the next blast the house to fall, if you that are leaning on your staves, and looking through your spectacles, being ready to enter upon eternity, do not mind your work immediately, wo, wo be unto you for ever! If God should work a spiritual miracle, in converting and pardoning an old grey-headed sinner, that hath been idle till the eleventh hour, Matt. xx. 6, would it not be a matter of amazement and wonder to men and angles, for the devil to be cast out of possesion after he had been an inhabitant threescore years and more? For such a

one to be born again would be strange indeed. I have heard of an old man, who being really converted not long before his death, cased this to be written on his tomb, "Here lies a very aged man of three years old. He reckoneth his time and life before as lost, and worth nothing.

Now, that you, that have put off God and hazarded your souls so long already, might lose no more time, consider these motives:

1. The present time is God's time, and must be yours.

2. God the righteous Judge will reckon with you for your time.

3. You have solemly promised to redeem it.

4. Men take and improve opportunity for other things.

5. Satan, your deadly enemy, is always busy, and will lose no time.

6. Saving grace is an active and springing principle.

7. Time once had, and lost, cannot be recalled.

8. How they prize time that have lost it.

9. God hath joined time and duty together.

10. On this moment of time eternity de*pends.*

Motive 1. Consider, the present time is God's and it must be yours. Do not you hear the Holy Ghost say, it is now high time to seek the Lord: and calling to you, come away, make speed? Hosea x. 12. Delays and laziness are the two great gulphs in which multitudes of souls are drowned and perish. How many are now in hell that purposed and promised to turn to God (as you do) hereafter? O fear and tremble, lest it should be your case. To enforce this take these few hints.

1. The present time hath most precepts; and God's commands, like warrants in the king's name, must be obeyed on a sight thereof. We say must be for the king; if thou art young, read Eccl. xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," Psal. xcv. 7. First seek the kingdom of God, Matth. vi. 33. You must not stay long, Hosea xiii. 13. Bless God, and wonder the golden thread of precious time is spun out so long.

2. It hath most promises, and they are great and precious, "I will receive you (saith

the Lord:) they that seek me early shall find me." The present time is an accepted time, in which God may be found, Psal. xxxii. 6. Now God calls, Hebrews, iii. 7, and you may come and welcome, John vi. 37, and will be a matter of unspeakablee comfort to man dying and looking into eternity, to know he hath done the work for which he had his life and time.

3. You have the best examples. And it is your duty to intimate and follow them who are gone to heaven before. Your dear Lord would lose no time; "I must do the work of him that sent me while it is day." When faithful Abraham was to offer his son Isaac, he made haste, Gen. xxii. 3, "He rose up early in the morning." Mary Magdalene came early in the morning to enquire after, and seek the Lord Jesus whom her soul loveth, Mark xvi. 2.

Motive 2. God the righteous Judge will reckon with you for your time: not for your health, wealth, strength, parts, graces, memories, but for every minute of your time. If at the day of judgment we must give an account of every idle word, much more for

so great a talent, so rich a treasure as time. A heathen could say, that every wise man must give an account of his buisness, and of his idleness. You may like fools waste your time, neglect your duty, and stand out against the call of God; but it will cost you dear, Eccles. xi. 9. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." The great Landlord of your time is at great expence to continue it. Those luminaries of heaven over your heads; and principally the prince of all the lights of heaven, the sun, that glorious and mighty giant, the prince and crown of all the corporal creatures, do tire and waste, as it were, their celestial vigour, to beget and give time: time is so rich a jewel, that God would have no man to value it to another. If one man had hurt another, he was to pay both for his cure and loss of time, Exod. xxi. 18, 19. So must you at the great day of account, for all your time—for every sermon you have heard, for every Sabbath and sacrament *you have had* all yours days.

Motive 3. You have all promised to redeem your time. The vows of Jehovah are upon you. Say with David, I will pay my vows. If the godly man will perform his promise to his hurt, Psal. xv. 4, much more should you for your profit. Take the counsel of the wise man, Eccles. v. 4, 5, " When thou vowest a vow, unto God, defer not to pay." Pay that which thou hast vowed; better it is that thou shouldst not vow, than to vow and not pay." How often have you engaged yourselves to leave your known sins, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Let conscience witness. If you that have re-resolved to read, pray, sanctify the Sabbath, &c. should still waste and trifle away the time it will not only be a breach of promise but a sin against light, for which thy heart will reproach thee; and if thy heart condemn thee, God is greater than thy heart, and knowest all things, 1 John iii. 20. Remember the promises that thou didst make at such a sacrament, or when struck at the heart by such and such a sermon, or when death was in thy family, or thyself near unto it, and defer not to perform thy covenant; God, who is a God

of truth, will not be mocked; and that you shall know ere it be long. Jephthah would perform his vow to God, "I have (said he) opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back," Jud. xi. 34, 35. Herod for his oath's sake murdered John the Baptist, Matth. xiv. 9, 10. How many times hast thou engaged to dedicate and devote thyself to God and his service? Therefore say, "Lord for my promise sake, I will sacrifice myself, and become thine, redeeming my time for thy glory, and mine own salvation."

Motive 4. Consider, men take and improve opportunities for other things. The fittest and best time is taken for buying, selling, ploughing, sowing, and gathering into barns, and especially in evil and hard times. Men will rise early, run, ride, and labour in the fire, as the prophet speaketh, redeeming the time. It is a metaphor taken from merchants that will be early in the market, lest the opportunity of buying the best commodities should be lost. The proverb is, that time and tide will stay for no man; and that we must make hay while the sun shineth. There is none but a *sluggard* will sleep in harvest: the

diligent husbandman will not lose a day then. Christians, in this great affair of your precious, immortal, and never-dying souls, do as men about other things: millers and mariners observe and improve every gale of wind; yea, the stork in the heaven, the turtle, the crane, and the swallow know and observe the time of their coming, Jer. viii. 7. They that say, to-day or to-morrow, we will, go into such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain, James vi. 13. will, as we say, turn every stone, and lose no time to buy a good bargain, to make a rich purchase: and shall not we redeem our time, and make the best of our spiritual markets, to make provision for our souls, that are more worth than all the world?

Motive 5. Satan, that enemy and grand soul deluder is always busy. He is an active devil, and he loveth to find us idle. Christians, that old serpent is never more at work than when we are idle; for idleness layeth a man open to all his hellish snares and temptations; and then if temptations come, you are out of God's way, and if Satan find you *on his ground* he will be too hard for you.

The apostle tells us, he goeth about, and still offers temptations for the wasting of our time; this roaring lion hath a large circuit: for ever since he was cast out of heaven, he hath been going to and fro in the earth, walking up and down in it, Job i. 7. His grand design is to devour, 1 Pet. v. 8. This black prince loves to prey upon precious souls; the soul being that sweet morsel he is still gaping at.—This adversary hath his several walks—he is in the shop, in the market, in the street, in the chamber, in the closet, and everywhere where sin is: and he is also in the congregation amongst the assemblies of the saints, when they are about spiritual services. When Joshua the high priest stood before the Lord, Satan was standing at his right hand to resist him, Zech. iii. 1. This deadly enemy was with Christ and his disciples at the passover, for there he entered into Judas, John xiii. 26, 27.—Therefore, Christians we have need to work and watch too.

The devil that hates you, and all mankind, doth bestir himself; he goeth forth into the broad way of profaneness, and there he tenders and tempts men with sensual objects; and he

entered into the by path of error, appearing as an angel of light, and enticeth wanton wits to suck down the poison of his damnable doctrine. And when once he hath injected his poison into the head, how much time is spent in writing and disputing to defend his delusions? We read that it was while men slept, the enemy (Satan) came and sowed tares among the wheat, Matt. xiii. 24, 39. He is a working busy devil, never at leisure, but is always spreading his baits, and casting his snares and nets to catch souls. Therefore be sober, be vigilant, and watch unto prayer, and employ this talent of precious time well. Idleness is Satan's shop, and the mother of mischief. David was at leisure, and on the roof of his house when Satan prevailed by that sad temptation, 2 Sam. xi. 2. Therefore set God always before you; keep in his way and be doing your duty, that you may be kept from his fiery darts. The flying bird is seldom shot. The cautious, diligent, active soul, is most secure.

Motive 6. Time once gone cannot be recalled. Time past is gone for ever; time present, if we may call it, is going; future

time is most uncertain, neither men, or angels can hinder, or stop it, turn, or bring it back again. If opportunities be not now taken, they may never be had. Be good husbands of your time, and work now, or you may never work. Time's redemption may be your salvation, therefore follow and improve the light before darkness overtake you. You all know, that yesterday, or the last hour will never come again. If thou hadst as much treasure in thy custody, or power as the world is worth, it cannot purchase one minute of time past. You that are old may as easily call back your youth, or become young again, as recover any part of this precious time, Luke xix. 42.

Motive 7. The nature of saving grace is working and springing up which turneth all the powers and faculties of the soul heavenward. Such is the activity and vigour of this gracious nature, that it will bring a man to a—what wilt thou have me to do? Acts ix. 6. Eph. ii. 10. It is not a lazy and languid thing, but full of life and power. The state of sin in scripture is described by death and darkness, which are a cessation

and privation of life, and light, and motion; and the state of grace is described by life, Eph. ii. which is powerful and most vivacious, like the sword of the Lord, and Gideon, doing great things. It is no wonder to see the men of the world that are born after the flesh, to be dull, sluggish, and inactive. But you that have a divine nature, and a spirit of life and power in your hearts, should be diligent and laborious, 2. Tim. i. 6. Rom. viii. 2. This living principle of grace made the holy apostle who excited others to redeem their time, so to employ his talent; the grace of God in him, made him labour more than they all, 1 Cor. xv. 10. The streams of grace that flow into the soul, are called rivers of living waters, John vii. 38, and a well of water springing up into eternal life, John iv. 14. So that Christians have greater advantage of doing good, and of living to God's glory. Therefore stir up the grace of God that is in you; cast off slothfuluess, and put on diligence; and laying aside every weight, rejoice, as the sun, to run the race that is set before you.

Motive 8. Consider how highly they prize

time that have lost it, and are come to the end of it; and who, with the loss of time, have lost themselves. We have many dreadful examples, that stand as so many sea-marks to warn us to take heed. The poor Jews were utterly undone by it. The Lord only knows how many of them are now in flames, that suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, for not improving the day of grace, Luke xix. 42. Matth. xxiii. 37. The foolish virgins having lost the opportunity of buying oil, came too late to the door. And Esau staid too long to get the blessing. Most do things when it is too late. Men go to bed late, rise late, go to market late, come to the church late, and seek peace with God when it is too late. The old Israelites marched toward Canaan when it was too late, and so lost that good land. O how dreadful will slighted mercy and lost time be to the awakening soul, when it comes to die, seeing itself in a Christless state! It was a speech once of a woman in terror of conscience, when divers ministers came to her, in a way of comforting her, she looked with a ghastly countenance upon them, and gave them this answer. 'Call back time again; if you can call back

time again, then there may be hope; but time is gone." Another great lady upon her death bed, cried out, "All too late! all too late! a world of wealth for an inch of time." Another gentlewoman of whom I have heard, who was wont to employ this precious talent of time in playing a cards, and such like games, coming from her sports late in the night, finding her waiting-maid, that was religious, reading in a good book, and casting her eyes on the book, over the maid's shoulder, speaks these words, or to this effect, "Thou poor melancholy soul! what, always reading and spending thy time thus! Wilt thou take no comfort in thy life?" The gentlewoman retiring to her chamber, went to bed. The maid, lodging in the same room, perceived her mistress under great disquiet, and perturbation of spirit, sighing and groaning bitterly. The servant hearing of it, several times called to her to know the reason she could not sleep. The maid urging of her, at last she cried out, and said, "I read this word *Eternity*, in thy book, which hath so pierced my heart, that I believe I shall never sleep more, till I have a better assurance of my eternity." Another

wanton lady that had wasted her time in sensuality, who died not many weeks past, told her vitious mother, standing by her bedside, "It is too late to speak of God to me now, for you have undone me! I am going to hell before, and you will certainly come after!" It is common with many dying, and going into the other world, sadly to bewail the loss of time. When they fear mercy is gone, patience expired, and the time respited for repentance over, then they prize opportunities at another rate. And O what would the damed in hell give to be admitted into the world, if they might but enjoy one day or hour, to deliver themselves from that dreadful place of torment, Luke xvi. 27, 28.

Motive 9. Consider, God hath joined time and duty together; and that in two respects.

1. In respect of assistance.

2. In respect of acceptance.

1. God hath joined time and duty together in respect of assistance; and what infinite Majesty hath joined, must not by any means be separated.—Work and time, opportunity and duty, must go together. Adam had his work in Paradise before the fall. And the

second Adam was always in action, to the end of his days: His meat and drink was to do the will of his father. 'I have no day for idleness,' was the language of a heathen. Christians, do your work in season, and you shall have assistance. God's opportunity is as a wind to the sails, or as oil to the wheels, which will make you glide through difficult duties with much facility. If we work in God's time, God will work with us, and we shall be workers together with him. Gospel time is in order to gospel work. Spiritual opportunites are appointed and continued for spiritual duties. The work of faith, repentance, mortification of sin, the plucking out of right eyes, the chopping off right hands, fighting and wrestling with the powers and princes of darkness, are exceeding difficult; but God whose arm is potent, will give power; and how easy will great work or service be done, when there is great assistance in the doing of it? A burden that is too heavy for one to lift, by the help of another will come up easily. This Paul witnesseth, Philip. iv. 13. "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." The feeble Jews, by the help of

JEHOVAH, raised up the wall of Jerusalem from its very rubbish, and that in spite of all opposition, Neh. iv. 2, 3, and vi. 15. They plying the work, the Lord was with them, by his great power and strong hand: they made their prayers unto God, when strength was almost decayed, and laboured in the work from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared, and so the wall was finished. Let time be redeemed, and then a great deal of work may be done in a little time. God's opportunity will make believing and repenting easy, Luke xix. 6; Acts ii. 37, 41; x. 14, 34. O therfore, while it is day, "Work out your salvation; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure," Philip ii. 12, 13.

2. God hath joined time and duty, in respect of acceptance. Every time is not an accepted time, 2 Cor. vi. 2. The Israelites that refused to march up to Canaan at God's command, lost their opportunity; and afterwards he would neither assist them, nor accept them. If thou stayest till God's time be past and gone, art thou sure God will accept thee hereafter? There is a time when God will not be found,

will not be spoken withal, Isa. lv. 6. Esau sought the blessing with tears, and it was denied him, Heb. xii. 17. Prov. i. 28. Do not say, What need so much speed? What need so much improving of time—so much reading, hearing, praying, preaching? But resolve upon thy duty now or never.

Motive 10, and lastly, Consider, that on the present moment of time eternity depends. This deep and heart-affecting meditation should even swallow up, and cause us to hasten unto our work. Let go time's opportunity, and you will certainly be ruined to all eternity. The painter being asked why he was so exact in drawing his lines, answered, "I paint for eternity." Consider, that you must hear and pray for eternity: fear, love, obey for eternity. A work of infinite moment depends on a moment of time. This day thou mayest throw thy last cast for eternity. This swift post will not stop, no, not for a moment. Secure soul! dost thou see eternity before thee, even at the door, and that there is but a step between thee and an endles state, and will thou not be more industrious for thy soul and heaven? If a man

were to run, to wrestle for his life, or for a crown, or kindgom, how would he strain and strive, and that with all his might? If a man were to go over sea for his life, and had but one gale of wind in his life time, would he come to the water side and lose it? If a malefactor had but a day appointed him to sue out his pardon, would he not improve it? This is all our cases: God has given us but a day to work in; when the day is ended, it will be night for ever, Luke xix. 12, 42; John ix. 4. Now, it may be, Christ is at the door, offering thee help—open to him, lest he withdraw and come no more. It is probably the Spirit of life and power, striving to turn you to God; O refuse not to comply with it, lest the spirit serve thee as Samuel did Saul, that came no more to see him, 1 Sam. xv. 35. I shall conclude the Motives with the words of the Psalmist. "To-day, if you wilt hear his voice, harden not your hearts, lest God swear in his wrath, that thou shall not enter into his rest," Psal. xcv. 7.

Now, if thou art resolved to put this duty into practice, through the help of Heaven, speedly and diligently observe these Directions.

Directions for the Redeeming of Time.

1. Take heed and beware of those things which rob you of your time.

2. Labour to convince yourselves of the worth of time, and value it accordingly.

3. Set apart a considerable portion of your time for the most secret duties.

4. Cast up and compute your time.

5. Maintain a holy fear upon thy heart, of coming to the end of time before thy work be done.

Direct. 1. Take heed of those things which rob you of this exceeding rich jewel, are these six; against which watch as for thy life.

1. Vain thoughts. 2. Worldy cares. 3. Unnecessary visits. 4. Unprofitable discourse. 5. Excessive indulging the outward man. 6. Unlawful, or immoderate recreations.

1. Vain thoughts. These are secret and subtile thieves, that insensibly rob us of our time every day, and in every duty. Vain, impertinent, and wicked thoughts, like Pharaoh's frogs, creep and crowd in upon us, even into our bed-chambers, and thurst out *good* thoughts, so that we cannot keep our

minds steady and composed. Solomon saith, "The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth." So are our thoughts gadding, and wandering up and down, here and there, and everywhere. These evil thoughts spring and rise from within us, as naturally as sparks from the fire, Gen. vi. 5. Matth. xv. 19. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." And they follow us continually in every place, and in every service, as the birds on Abraham's sacrifice, which Abraham did drive away. They must not lodge, Jer. iv. 14. Though we cannot hinder the fowls from flying in the air, or over our heads, we may hinder them from pitching on our heads. Holy David had vain thoughts, but he hated them, Psal. cxix. 113. There is not a minute but many thoughts pass from us, as in a minute sands do in an hour glass, Psal. xciv. 19. Christians consider how much of that time is lost which you spend in holy duties, by vain thoughts; when we should draw near to God, our hearts by our thoughts and steal away. And there are but a few awakened tender spirits truly sensible of this intrinsical secret evil, though much of a Christian's *duty* and the very inwards of

religion lie in observing the thoughts, and in watching the heart. Therefore, above all keeping, "Keep thy heart," Prov iv. 23, and "Take heed of thy spirit," Mal. ii. 15. 16.

2. Worldly cares are great wasters of our precious time. The most do mind earthly things, Philip. iii. 19. Men's heads, hearts, and thoughts are so intent about the things that perish, that they do hardly entertain a serious thought of God and eternity all the day; God is not in all their thoughts.—"They that are of the flesh do mind the things of the flesh," Rom. viii. 5. And not only the children of this world, but even professors themselves are so eager and vehement in the pursuit of this poor earth, that almost all their time and strength is spent about it. And while men are so careful and solicitous about many things and in a very crowd and hurry of business, it is impossible for them to redeem time for God and their souls. As soon as their eyes are open, the things of this world stand as so many suitors, to invite and draw them. Some have their hearts so overcharged and surfeited with the cares and fears *of this evil* world, that their abundance will

not suffer them to sleep, Luke xxi. 34. Eccles. v. 12. Now when it is thus, opportunities are lost, souls are neglected, and holy duties omitted; or, if used, they are very unsuccessful, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Matth. xiii. 22. Therefore take heed of the world, which is so great a devourer of time.

3. Unnecessary visits are great wasters of our time, of which you must take heed; it being no mark of godliness, but the contrary. The Wise Man speaking of the vicious and virtuous woman giveth them this different character, viz. the one, "Her feet abideth not in her house," Prov. vii. 11, the other, "Looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness," Prov. xxxi. 27. And we read of some that "Wandered about from house to house, being idle tattlers, and busy bodies; speaking things which they ought not," 1 Tim. v. 13. How many do trifle away the time in going from house to house, to whom it may be said, as Pharaoh to the oppressed Israelites.—"Ye are idle, ye are idle!" Let that time you have to spare from your callings and families be spent *in reading*, prayer, or other religious

exercises; and in all your visits, intend and design the doing of good, or the receiving of good, and not the passing away of this precious time. When your friends and neighbours are sick and under the hand of God, go to them, and give them counsel for their souls, Rom. xv. 2.

4. Unprofitable discourse robbeth us of much time. Some employ their tongues in telling fabulous and filthy stories; others, in discoursing of parties and opinions, and in talking of the faults and miscrriages of other men; some about the times, and enquiring after news. This did the men of Athens, who spent their time in nothing else, but either "to tell or hear some new thing," Acts xvii. 21. And the most, when they come together, pass away the time in discoursing of the world, and the concerns of it. But let Christians, when they converse, imitate their Lord; the words which proceeded out of his mouth were gracious.—"Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how *you ought to* answer every man," Col. vi. 5, 6.

5. Excessive indulging the outward man. Much of our time is spent in making provision for the flesh, Rom. i. 32. Some hours every day are taken up in providing for the belly, to please the palate; and some at their tables take up much time: others to gratify a proud fancy: much time is wasted in decking and trimming the body. There are those that spend more time in looking into a glass, than upon their knees in praying to God. A godly minister coming to a gentlewoman's house to dinner, where he waited from ten of the clock till one, all which time she was dressing, burst out into weeping to think that she should spend so much time in trimming, and be so little in praying. Also excessive sleep doth devour great part of our short time and life. When we should be on our knees in our closets, we are in our beds, or on our couches. —Others waste their precious time in ale-houses and taverns, and brothel-houses, from day to day, God's day being not exempted: against such there is a dreadful woe, "Woe unto you that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue all night till wine inflame them," Isa. v. 11, 12.

6. Unlawful and immoderate recreations are the occasions of great expense of time. Recreation (not to be used but as physic in case of need) is an engrosser and waster of our time, that is dear and precious. Many are so excessive in it, as if they were sent into the world to do nothing but sport. What time is spent in carding, dancing, interludes, stage plays, bear and bull-bating, hunting, hawking, and in reading romantic books? which for men and women professing the gospel are not of good report, Philip. iv. 8. The turning of the Bible, or some good book, is more becoming a Christian, than turning a pack of cards —a game so much accustomed by the profane, and an occasion of so much sin. These things will cause bitterness and horror at last—they are honey to the fancy, but a sting to the conscience. Consider which will afford most comfort dying. *Item*, So many days in recreation, or so many days in humiliation; so many hours in prayer, or so many hours in playing at cards; so many hours in vain filthy discourse, or so many hours in serious and heavenly conference? *Item*, So many Sabbaths in reading, hearing, and singing of

psalms, or so many Sabbaths spent in eating, drinking, walking, or worse? Holy Bradford accounted that hour lost wherein he had not done some good. Titus Vespasian was wont to say *diem perdidi*, I have lost a day.

Direct. 2. Set a due estimate upon this precious jewel of time, that your hearts may be so truly tender, as to make conscience of wasting of it. A godly minister was wont to say, when he saw the morning clear and serene, it is pity this day should be lost. O value your time; reckon more of one Sabbath than of the best fair or market that ever thou wast in in all thy life. Set upon the now day of grace the price of eternity. I have told you already, the damned in hell, if it might be, would give a world for an opportunity to make peace with God.

Direct. 3. Set apart some considerable portion of time for the most secret duties.

1. For ordinary secret prayer and meditation, set some apart in the morning and evening of every day; and do not catch and snatch at praying times. Many serve the world and the flesh all day, and put off God with a few words or sleepy prayers at night. Prayer is

the breath of the new creature, and the sign of a spiritual life, Acts ix. 6. Christians let your prayers be secret, sincere, fervent, constant. The way to heaven, said a good man, is through the closet; and they that have been eminent in piety, have been excellent in prayer. Holy David would not let a morning pass without prayer, Psal. v. 3. Yea three times a-day he was at this blessed duty, Psal. lv. 17. It was his element and constant employment, Psal. cix. 4. Your prayer must be fervent, if it be effectual. Prayer without fervency, is as a bullet without powder, or as a bird without wings, that cannot mount up into the air.

Holy fire must be put to the daily sacrifice. God answers by fire. He that looks upon the heart, regards the manner of your prayers, more than the number of your prayers. Cold, slight mumbling of a few petitions, either out of custom or to stop the mouth of conscience, will not prevail, Psal. xxv. 11. Isa. xxvi. 9. James v. 16. Christians, the time that you spend with God in secret, is the sweetest time, and best improved: therefore if thou lovest thy life, be in love with prayer; resolve to

spend some time with God in private every day.

2. Extraordinary private fasting is a duty very necessary, and practised by few. Soul afflicting days between God and man's self, would through grace, be much for spiritual advantage. Husbands should mourn apart, and their wives apart, Zech. xii. 12, 13. Fasting-days will be soul-fattening days, Acts x. 30. And blessed are they that mourn, Matth. v. 4.

The third private duty is self-examination; when thou art alone, ask thyself these questions.

1. Is it most certain that I am in the state of grace?

2. Is grace thriving? Doth my inward man prosper?

3. Do I live in no known sin against conscience, Psal. xviii. 23. and exercise myself unto godliness?

4. Do I make conscience of redeeming time so as to join time and duty together? A precious servant of the Lord was wont to say, if a man could answer to these two questions, he *need* not fear; first, am I God's

child? secondly, am I in God's way? Psal. cxix. 94.

Direct. 4. If you would redeem your time, compute your time. Pray thou mayest do it, Psal. xc. 12; Psal. xxxix. 4. Numbering the people was David's sin; but numbering his days a duty. It is common for men to number their sheep, their cattle, houses, lands, wares, money; but to number our days is a rare kind of numbering; for the neglect of which, what arrears are we fallen into with the great Landlord of our time? Christians, divide your time into parcels, and consider how little God hath; how much time was spent in thy infancy and childhood, before thou hadst the use of reason; how much time is spent in our callings and employments about the world? how much in eating, drinking, and unprofitable discourse? besides all this, half or more is spent in sleeping; so that in the work of God and our immortal souls, we employ but a very little: therefore it is more than time to redeem it.

Direct. 5. Maintain always an holy fear upon thine heart of coming to the end of time *before the* work be done. Live continually

in an expectation of your great change; buy, sell, converse, read, pray, hear, and do all as dying men, and passing to receive the recompense of endless joy, or woe. Christians, if you would work while it is day; if you would glorify God on earth; if you would secure and eternally save your immortal souls; if you would not be a prey to the prince of darkness; if you would stand with comfort before the Lord Jesus at his dreadful bar; if you would not spend your days without hope; arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with you.

ON CONSIDERING OUR LATTER END.

DISCOURSE II.

"*O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.*"—DEUT. xxxii. 29.

IT is always seasonable to insist on such subjects as direct us to speak of another world, especially in times of great sickness and mortality, in which thousands of souls night and day have been crowding into eternity (witness the late dreadful plague in sixty-five), I therefore made choice of this serious and heart-awakening subject, that drowsy, secure souls might be awakened to a deep consideration of the world to come. The whole chapter

is styled the Song of Moses, his swanlike song, or song before his death—the dying words of that eminent faithful servant of God; and if the words of a dying man are to be regarded, how much more the words of a dying Moses? This Moses being ready to go into the other world, composed this song, of which the text is part; and dying words are weighty, and make the deepest impression.

The Song is partly Narratory, Minatory, and Promissory.

In the narrative you have 1. A narration of the infinite greatness, and most glorious attributes of the God of Israel, introduced with a pathetical and awakening acclamation, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak, and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth."

2. We have a narration of their corruption, ingratitude, and rebellion, verses 5, 6, "They have corrupted themselves, they are a perverse and crooked generation; do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise?" notwithstanding the remarkable favours and rare indulgence of God toward them. Yet they forsook him, provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, and sacrificed to devils, and not

unto God, ver. 16, 17. Because of which he threatens,

1. To hide his face from them, than which nothing more bitter to the soul, ver. 20.

2. To inflict variety of sore temporal judgments upon them, than which nothing more burdensome to the body. "I will heap mischief upon them, I will spend mine arrows upon them; they shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction; the sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of grey hairs: for a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn into the lowest hell." And, ver. 27, God gives the reason why he would not utterly destroy them, and make a full end of them, "were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy," &c.

And now the words of the text seem to be the application of the whole, O that they would consider their latter end.

You may look upon these words, as it were a mount cast up, by which the people of Israel might take a view of things to come, and have a prospect of what should befal them in their

latter end, O that they were wise! to be wise, is opposed to that brutishness; ver. 28. They were a nation void of counsel, for they wanted the right exercise of reason, and that wisdom which is from above, to observe and improve the gracious providences and dispensations of God.

That they would consider. Consideration is a fixed act of the understanding, or mind, in order to practice; for doing and considering are frequently joined together, Judges xviii. 14. Now therefore consider what ye have to do, Heb. x. 24. Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works. The same thing is variously expressed in scripture, viz. To look narrowly upon a thing, to call to mind, to know and to consider in one's heart, to call things to remembrance, to commune with a man's heart, Psal. lxxvii. 5, 6.

The latter end. By which we are not only to understand those tremendous and desolating judgments that should surprise them in this world, but to remember the great things of the other, as old age, earth, the grave, eternity; death, with its antecedents, concomitants, and

consequents. The words contain a pathetical option or wish, " O that they were wise !" In which observe—

1. The person wishing, viz. The great and glorious God.

2. The thing desired, and that is divine wisdom—a jewel indeed, a prize far above rubies.

3. The persons for which God thus desired, viz. For Israel, a people nigh to the Lord, and yet a brutish, inconsiderate, and unwise people, O that they were wise ! &c.

4. What this wisdom is, wherein it doth consist. viz. in the consideration of their latter end.

The doctrine observable from the words are these :

Doct. 1. That God doth earnestly desire, and long for the good of a people.

Doct. 2. That an inconsiderate people are a foolish and unwise people.

Doct. 3. That want of serious consideration is incident, not only to the profane, but to men professing God and godliness. The Israelites were the only church of God then in the world, and yet they were not wise to

understand and consider their latter end. I shall not handle this part, but speak to the chief scope and intent of the words in this one proposition.

Doct. That it is a duty and matter of high concernment to consider our latter end. O that they were wise! that they would consider viz. Practically consider, and live always in the belief of the other world, so as to do up all their work while it is day: this seems to be a great import of the Spirit of God in this text.

Eternal souls, whatever escapeth your thoughts, this must not: this should be your *Vade-mecum*, it should rise up with you, lie down with you, walk with you, wherever you go, or are. This Moses himself, that precious and renowned servant of God, desired, seeing such a dreadful mortality in the wilderness, and so many sad spectacles of divine wrath, Psal. 12. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. And as Moses desired it, so also David, Psal. xxxix, 4, "Lord, make me to know my end, and measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am." And Solomon

sets a better upon it, Eccles. vii. 2, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart." And it is an argument that men are dead, when at a house of mourning they are not moved with due compassion, to due and deep consideration of their doleful and dying condition.

I shall now come to shew you what we are to consider concerning our latter end; and O that it might take a deep impression upon all that read these plain truths!

Seriously consider and believe, 1. That it is most certain that an end will be. For whatsoever the scripture speaks of death, the grave, and hell, is an infallible truth. You are to consider that every man is mortal, must die, and pass into the other world; and that in every one of your bodies there is an immortal and never-dying soul; and that after these bodies have slept in the dust of the earth, they shall live again, there shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust; and at the end of the world a tribunal shall be set up before which all the world shall be made to stand.

And that as soon as your breath is gone, the spirit shall return to God who gave it; either to the justice of God, or to the mercy of God; to the place of joy, or to the place of torment.

Our transgression, natural constitution, with a statute law of heaven, have brought us under a necessity of dying. Wherever the viper fasteneth, it killeth certainly, though not suddenly: sin and death are twins: sin is a great murderer that lets death into the world, for her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17. viz. Thou shalt become mortal. As soon as Adam had sinned (and we in him our representative), he became subject and liable to death. Sin, like a mighty monarch, reigned from Adam to Moses. A malefactor cast at the bar is dead in law, though he be reprieved for a time; the body (saith the apostle) is dead because of sin. Some die in the womb, some in their infancy, some in their youth, and they that live longest die at last: death never hurts a man but with his own weapons; it always finds sin in us, and the sting of death is sin. And wherever you meet it, you must say of

it, as Ahab to the prophet, Hast thou found me, O my enemy? Death and every death is the fruit of sin—death temporal, death spiritual, and death eternal. The soul that sins shall die, Ezek. xxxviii. 20. The wages of sin is death, Rom. vi. 23. Our natural constitution rendereth us obnoxious to a dissolution. Our flesh is not the flesh of stone or brass; but frail or mouldering dust; to which, as to our centre, we must return, Gen. iii. 19, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Eccles. iii. 20, "All go to one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to the dust again." Heb. ix. 27, "It is appointed to man once to die." Job xiv. 5. "His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that it cannot pass." No shield or buckler can fortify against this king of terrors; impartial death (the great leveller) knows no faces, and therefore none can be exempted. If faithfulness might challenge immunity from death, then Moses might have been excused; if beauty then Absalom; if strength then Sampson; if sincerity and piety, then David; if subtility, then Ahithophel; if

magnanimity, then Alexander; if riches, then Cresus; if wisdom, then Solomon: but one event happens to them all. So that when the fatal moment cometh, no ransom can be given—no art or skill can keep us here. Sirs, were this doctrine of the other world believed, it would have a greater impression upon our hearts. Did we seriously consider of that future state of retribution, according to our faith, to which we must live or die, stand or fall, to eternity, it would have a greater influence upon our lives.

2. *Consid.* That at your latter end all things in this world will fail you, and take their leave of you for ever. All your natural endowments, outward enjoyments, parts, parentage, birth, breeding, wit, wealth, crowns, kingdoms, pearls, diamonds, houses, lands, wives, children, friends, when your breath is gone, all these are gone, Prov. xxvii. 24. Riches are not for ever, neither doth a crown endure to all generations. The glittering sun of all outward glory will certainly set; which your own experience and scripture evidence doth clearly evince. Riches have wings, and fly away, Prov. xxiii. 5. The fashion of this

world passeth away, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out, 1 Tim. vi. 7. If a man were possessed of as much of this world as Solomon the great king of Jerusalem, who had great magnificent buildings, fruitful, pleasant vineyards, gardens, orchards, and trees of all manners of fruits, variety of servants, possession of great and small cattle, heaps of gold and silver, peculiar treasures of kings, musical instruments, men and women singers, and whatsoever his eyes desired; yet when he takes a serious view of all things, he would say with him, all is vanity, and that a man hath no profit of all his labour which he taketh under the sun, which made the wise man even to hate life, Eccles. ii.

Since the fall there is a curse upon the creature, which indeed is deceiving, vexing, decaying; and all outward comforts may be compared to Pharaoh's host, who are alive this hour, and the next drowned and dead upon the sea-shore; and though ye judge, they shall endure for ever, Psal. xlix. 11. Luke xii. 11. They will deal by you as Absalom's mule, that left him in the greatest extremity.

What woeful miseries attend worldly riches in the getting, keeping, and parting with them? They are snares and thorns, plagues and scorpions unto many—they pierce them through with many sorrows, 1 Tim. vi. 10.

Yet here men toil, beat their brains, weary their bodies, try their spirits, break their sleep, perplex their thoughts, rack their consciences, ingulf and drown themselves in cares, endanger their souls, dreaming of nothing but perpetuity; and when they have done all, like the silk-worm, die in their woe: nay, many a man survives his own happiness, which perisheth before he perisheth; and it is the worst of miseries to out-live our own happiness; therefore let not riches heighten your hearts, and prompt you to pride, which is too common.

This day the rich worldling sung a requiem to his sadly deluded soul, concluding he had much laid up; the night following his soul is required. Haman is to-day the second man in the kingdom, but soon lost all and his life too. Now doth Nebuchadnezzar walk in his stately royal palace of Babel, priding himself in his outward pomp; but while the word was

in his mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee be it spoken, thy kingdom is departed from thee," Dan. iv. 29, 30, 31.

Jerusalem this year is the princes among the provinces, the next year made tributary; and they that lived delicately are desolate, and embrace the dung-hills, Lam. i. 1. and 4, 5. Yesterday Job's cattle might be numbered by thousands, and to-morrow he is stripped of all, and left naked. Neither is our age without a sad and dreadful instance, viz. famous London on the Lord's day standing, by Wednesday burnt, and laid in ashes, and thousands of her inhabitants houseless and labourless; therefore if riches increase, set not your hearts upon them; they are uncertain, cannot satisfy, cannot profit, will perish and that for ever. O then let those precious, dear everlasting jewels, laid up in your mouldering, decaying, dying bodies, be cared for! What can it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Matth. xvi. 26.

3. Consider, how soon all the present pleasures of sin will be gone, and leave nothing but a sting.—Old age, weakness, sick-

ness, will make a great change in the outward man, as to beauty, strength, natural vigour, liveliness of senses, and all whereby a man might take any pleasure in the world, or in his lusts. When sickness, old age, death's forerunner cometh, it will make a strange change in the most comely countenances. Corporal comeliness and beauty is soon stained; sickness will not only fade it, but deface it; you that are endowed with comely proportion sparkling eyes, well favouredness, amiableness of colours, of white and red, with straightness and agility of body, with a cheerful aspect; when old age cometh, it will plough deep furrows in those fair faces; and yet many (ignorant of their foul souls, and filthy hearts) are proud of their fair faces and comely features, so that they grow wanton by reason of it, and to set out their beauty, and whiteness of their skins (not being contented with their Creator's curious make,) will add painting, patches, powdering, crisping, curling, artificial hair, and what not:—know that old age will not only wither your beauty (which is but skin-deep) but abate your outward strength, natural vigour, liveliness of

senses, and all whereby you may have any worldy pleasure.

Old age is Solomon's evil day, when the sun, moon and stars will be darkened, the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low, and fear shall be in the way; when the outward man is decayed, viz. eyes dim and dark, ears deaf, teeth rotten, gums bare, heads bald, breath corrupt, hands and feet weak and trembling—an evil day indeed, in which you shall find no delight in your former dalliances: for the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail, Eccles. xii. 5. But the beauty of grace withers not under the greatest declinings of natural beauty; for grace is the oil in the lamp that never goeth out, but shineth more and more. The king's daughter is all glorious within, Psal. xlv. 13. Godliness which is God's likeness, and that lustre is very lovely in the sight of God and man: thou art all fair my dove, and there is no spot in thee.

Sinners! you that now taste the sweet of sin, *rejoice to do* wickedly, that spend your

time in riotous drunkenness, in chambers of wantonness, lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch yourselves on your couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, that chaunt to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls, that are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph, that put far away the evil day; know that the fire of sin will burn, and that your sweet morsels are but for a moment: those sweet morsels and delicate dainties will cost you dear,

Hear now this, you that are given to pleasure; that feast yourselves in doing evil; it is but a little time, and you will see and say that all your delights, hopes, joys, are past and gone, and that you shall never see or taste them more—only the gravel, gall, guilt and sting will still remain. You that love this hellish banquet of sin (the stolen waters that are sweet and bread eaten in secret that is pleaent,) do not know that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell, Prov. ix. 17, 18. Sin is a sweet poison, pleasant in the acting, but bitter in the end; for the soul that sinneth shall die, Ezek. xiii. 20. And will you spare it, and keep it still within your mouth—hide it under your tongue

until it become the gall of asps within you? Job xx. 12, 13, 14. Consider also, that your secret wickedness, committed in the dark, in corners, that is marked and close kept, is known to God. The infinitely holy and heart-searching God marks them, Job xx. 14. Hosea vii. 2. Watcheth them, Job xiv. 16. Sealeth them; they are done among his treassures, Deut. xxxii. 34. And they will find you out, Numb. xxxii. 23; and (if not truly and deeply repented of and pardoned) they will lie down with you in the grave, and follow you into the other world, and meet you at God's dreadful bar, and be discovered in the sight of the whole world; evil shall pursue the sinner; this evil thing and bitter (bred in the womb, not buried in the grave, not extinguished by the fire of hell) shall pursue the sinner into hell. Sinners, this is most certain, unrepented sins will never leave you, but lie down and rise with you; your bones are full of the sins of your youth, which shall lie down with you in the dust, Job xx. 11. Sin is a bad bed-fellow, and a worse grave-fellow; and if it sleep with you, it will awake with you when the dreadful trumpet shall sound,

" Arise ye dead and come to judgment." The damned in hell have all their sins about them; that which was the cause of their being cast into hell, will be their everlasting companions there, and will you take these vipers and scorpions into your bosoms, that will be always gnawing upon your hearts. Know this, your posting sun of all sinful sensual delights will set in the dreadful ocean of endless, easeless, and remediless sorrow.

4. Consider, that only which is eternal will stand you in stead when you come to die: viz. when you shall shoot the vast gulf, and launch out into the infinite ocean of eternity, that hath neither bounds, nor banks, nor bottom.

Immortal souls! do you see any thing that hath eternity graven upon it? There are varieties of objects, both of persons and things, that present themselves to your view. Lift up your eyes to the vast heavens, that are bespangled and beautified with a glorious sun, moon, and glittering stars, that have been there for some thousands of years, see whether eternity be there? No: they had their beginning, and must have their period, Gen.

i. Neh. x. 11, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish, they wax old as doth a garment, but thou remainest." The day is coming wherein the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth with the works that are therein shall be burnt up, Matth. xxiv. 29: 2 Pet. iii. 10.

Moreover, look to your near and dear relations, for whom you expose yourselves to so much pain, care and trouble: look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah that bare you (as the prophet speaketh in another case), to your husbands, wives, children, parents, friends, neighbours, magistrates, ministers; are these for ever? No; many of them are gone down to the dark valley already, and shall return no more. Or else look to those brave heroes, Alexander, Cæsar, Pompey, and where are they? Are they not all conquered by the king of terrors, and held in the poison of the grave for many hundred years? Look to

your gold, silver, pearls, perfumes, costly cabinets, stately structures, princely palaces; are these for ever? No; they are corruptible things, and cannot deliever in the day of the Lord's wrath. King's palaces are desolate palaces, ready to become a heap; crowns are translated from head to head: scepters pass from one hand to another, and kingdoms have their rise, and they have their ruin: and will you sell your precious souls for pelf and transitory trash, which indeed is more in expectation than in fruition: Consider how little that is worth for which you run the dreadful hazard of losing heaven.

But now (if you are believers) lift up your eyes to the everlasting hills, and put the eagle's eye of faith within the vail; there is the Ancient of Days. God the Father is the chiefest good, and highest happiness; there is Christ your dear Redeemer, the prince of glory, and a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: and upon the favour of God, the love and righteousness of Christ, you may see eternity.

Again, turn your eyes inward to the hidden man, of the heart; is there the seed of God,

or impress of his image, and the divine nature? 1 John iii. 9: 2 Pet. i. 4. Is there any active, living, springing principle of grace? John iv. 14. On this thou mayest read eternity; grace is the heir of glory, every drop of which runs into the ocean, and nothing else can befriend you; for the things that are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

5. Consider which of the two eternities you are going towards. I would have you deeply and seriously consider, that there is one place for the sheep, and another for the goats; one place for the righteous, and another for the ungodly; one place for believers, and another for unbelievers; one place for the dead, and another for the living; an eternal night, or eternal day; eternal pains, or eternal pleasure; eternal bliss, or eternal burnings; an eternal life, or eternal death; an eternal heaven, or eternal hell.

Now sinners, stop here and consider, unto which of these two do you belong? Have you any certainty of a blessed and glorious eternity? That heaven or hell will be your place or portion? For resolving of which consider, and answer to these queries.

Have you unfeignedly believed, repented, and turned to God with the renting of your hearts, and resigned your whole souls to him? Do you find your hearts affectionately and vehemently carried out to Jesus Christ, so as not to be satisfied without union and communion with him? Is Jesus Christ the beloved and darling of your souls?

Have you (been sensible of what you have done against him, and of your unworthiness of him), by a deep and hearty humiliation, laid a foundation for heaven and happiness? You must sow before you can reap; and they that sow in tears shall reap in joy, Ps. cxxvi. 5.

Are you heaven-born, or born after the flesh only? If by a sound work of conversion you are become new creatures indeed, 2 Cor. v. 17, it is well; stand and wonder at amazing mercy: if not, fear and tremble; for if you fail here, you are utterly undone for ever.

Further, are you risen with Christ, or dead in trespasses and sins? Eph. ii. 1. Are you partakers of the first resurrection, or are you in your graves rotting, stinking in your sins, being past feeling? Are you truly at odds with sin, and every sin? Or do you take

pleasure in unrighteousness? Are you for godliness in the life and power of it? And is there no reigning allowed sin in your hearts and ways? Doth sin, and every sin look ugly, feel heavy, taste bitter, and no idol of the heart to keep Christ out of his throne? No secret sin lived in against conscience? Do you pray and desire to live in the fear, and as under the eye of God, making conscience of secret sins, and of secret duties, with a sincere respect to God's glory, and your own good? Doth the heart-searching God find you in your closets, on your knees, morning and evening, pouring out your souls before him? Every one that is godly will pray, Psal. xxxii. 6.

Are you crucified to the world, or do your souls cleave unto the dust? Have you a treasure in heaven, or treasures in the field only? Have you bought the pearl, or are you content with peebles? Who are your associates—the devil's herd, or Christ's flock? Are companions of swine and filthy dogs, the world of ungodly; or of the doves and lambs of Christ? Whose mark have you, the mark of sheep? viz. holiness, humility, innocency:

or the mark of goats? viz. lust, pride, and uncleanness.—Who keeps the throne—the King of saints, or the god of this world? Do your hearts and lives speak heaven, heaven, heaven, or hell, hell, hell? Hell is not more the place of the devil, than the heart of the wicked man. Can you look upwards, and say, Our father which art in heaven? Or must you look downwards, and say, Our father which art in hell? How can you take comfort in any thing of this world, that are like to be unspeakably and eternally miserable in the other world? Suppose you had as much of the riches, pomp, and glory of the world, as any man that ever lived upon the face of the earth: if you could say, this crown, this kingdom, this country is mine; this gold, this silver, or this shop, these goods, this manor, this farm, fields, these flocks, this corn, these cattle, these mines, these pearls, these jewels are mine; what would all avail you, if your souls are the devil's? Now, how stands the case of your precious souls? Are they secured? Have you made a real preparation for death and judgment, or left all undone? *Are you* vessels of honour prepared unto glory?

Or vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? Rom. ix. 22. Let conscience speak: commune with your hearts, Psal. iv. 4. Consider your ways, Hag. i. 5. Search and try yourselves, Lam. xiii. 40. Prove your own work: examine yourselves whether you are in the faith, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Whatsoever you sow, you shall certainly reap, Gal. vi. 7, 8. And in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall lie, Eccles. xi. 3. If it falleth to the north, it lieth to the north: if it falleth towards the south, it lieth towards the south. If you live and die towards heaven, heaven will be your place and home: but if you live and die towards hell, hell will be your place and home: for according to your doing in this world will be your doom in the world that is to come, 1 Cor. v. 10. And is it not sad and dreadful to believe that you have precious, never-dying souls, and do not know whether they shall be saved or damned, stand or fall live or die, to all eternity? And yet this is the case of thousands and millions of men and women now in the world, that are making post-haste to hell, and think and hope they are *in the way* to heaven, Prov. xvi. 25.

6. Consider, how near you are to everlasting habitations? You are all going down the stream of time into the great ocean, and you will shortly come thither. There is not a step you step, nor breath you draw, nor a word you speak, nor a moment of time you live, but hath an influenee upon eternity. These golden sands running between two eternities, will quickly begone, a short race will soon be run. O what a nothing is our life! viz. a span, a dream, a wind, a shadow, a vapour, a post, swifter than a post, Job vii. 6. You are all going to your long and last home, to the house of eternity; every man goeth to his long home, Eccles. xii. 5. How doth he go? He goeth swiftly, always in motion night and day, sleeping and walking, labouring or loitering, this post hastens; time and tide stay not—Again, he goeth insensibly; man doth not discern or perceive how his precious time doth fly from him; the shadow on the dial passeth from one hour or figure to another, from the sun rising to the setting, though its speedy transient motion is not observed: so man passeth from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, from youth to midle-age, and so to old age and

the grave, and we take little or no notice of it. Again, he goeth irresistibly; neither men nor angels, physic nor physician can keep him here; it is as easy to obstruct the whole course of nature, or to hinder God's covenant of day and night. A man may as well keep the sun from rising, the sea from flowing, or the wind from blowing, as keep man from dying, and going to the place appointed for all living, We are but of yesterday, Job viii. 9. It was but (as it were) yesterday, and we were in the womb of nothing, had no being; and it will be but (as it were to-morrow, and we shall disappear, and be (as to this world) as if we had never been. We are crushed before the moth, Job iv. 19. And in a moment we go down into the grave, and shall come up no more. Yea, our pictures and statues remain fresh and firm, when we are gone down to the bars of the pit, and rest together in the dust; and our very dogs and horses live, when we are dead and become meat for worms.

This heart affecting meditation had a very great influence on a great Persian king, who taking a view of his huge vast army, wept to think, that within an hundred years not one man

of them would be left alive. Sinners, you are to look beyond the grave because after death the judgment, Heb. ix 27. O then tremble to consider, that you are all this day standing before the door of eternity, either on the brink of life, or the brink of death; upon the borders of heaven, or the mouth of hell; and shall ere long be made to see what is on the other side of the wall: as soon as death hath shut your eyes, you shall see and know what you shall be for ever. If you are now unconverted, and without God in the world, you are almost come within sight of the burning lake of fire and brimstone; but if saints, you are almost within the view of the new Jerusalem; if ungodly sinners, you are almost within the dreadful noise of the millstones of wrath, and the rattlings of the fiery chains of the prisoners of hell, the dolorous outcries, and hideous roarings of the spirits in prison, crying out one and all, "O what evil, and an infinite evil and bitter thing is sin, which we would not consider or believe, till we came to this dismal place of torment!" There you may hear the cursed, tormented unbelievers, crying out upon his God-provking, Christ- rejecting, and soul-

murdering sin of infidelity, saying in the anguish of his sonl, "If I had accepted of the remedy, I had not been in this doleful misery; the Lord of glory was at the door—I heard him knock a long time, but would not let him in, therefore is hell's mouth shut upon me for ever." The swearers, liars, blasphemers, that did tear and rend the sacred name of their Creator, and swear by the blood and wounds of their offered Redeemer, are heard with their hot and scorched tongues to bewail that ever they should take the name of the infinitely holy God in vain.

There the hypocritical and false hearted professors, the sinners in Sion, cry out and wish, that either they had made no shew of love to Christ and holiness at all, or that they had loved him in sincerity, and above all, that so they might have escaped everlasting burnings.

There the impudent, ranting, swineish drunkard, that pleased his eyes and palate with his pleasant cups, sparkling wine, and cursed companions, is heard to wish in the agony of his soul, O that I had been sober, temperate, abstemious, that so I might not have tasted of the wine of the wrath of God, which is red and full

of mixture, the dregs whereof I must be made to drink for ever! Psal. lxxv. 8. Isa. v. 22.

There the filthy unclean adulterers and adulteresses, that burned in their hellish lusts, which they were resolved to satisfy, are heard to wish, O that I had been sober, modest, chaste, and that our wanton lustful eyes had been stark blind, and never seen or known the face of man or woman, that we might not have suffered the vengeance of eternal fire! Jude, verse 7.

There the notoriously vile abominable Atheists, that mocked and scoffed at the belief of a Diety and judgment to come, and that said, in the pride and stoutness of their hearts, let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it; for we have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement, may be heard to roar and cry, O that we had heard, believed, and feared what was foretold by ministers, concerning this dark and dreadful place, before it was too late!

There the worldling and wretched earthworm, that made earth his heaven, gold his god and chiefest good, is heard to say, in the bitterness of heart, O that I had never seen

any gold or silver all my days, so that I might have had a better portion! O that I had with Lazarus begged my bread, so that I might not have come into this place of torment!

There the timorous, fearful, cowardly apostate and backslider in heart, who, for fear of a little outward hardship, declined his professed principles, and turned his back on Christ, and his persecuted little flock, may be heard to wish, that either he had never known the way of righteousness, or that he had been faithful to the death.

Secure and sadly deluded souls, consider you are not far from this direful gulph, where multitudes of souls lament and weep day and night; and certainly if the horrible and amazing cries and yellings of those infernal spirits were sounding in your ears, you would not rest quiet in your beds and houses.

There were sad and astonishing outcries when the world was drowned—when Sodom was burnt, to see the clouds suddenly drop fire on their heads and houses, and men, women, and children burning together; but this was but a flea-bite to that place where there is

weeping and gnashing of teeth to all eternity. Remember all you that forget God, the day of your calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon you make haste, Deut. xxxii. 35.

But if you are the servants of the Lord, and real saints, mourners in Sion, lift up your heads and hearts, for you belong to another place, a better country, viz. to mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. And know that you are almost come within the hearing of these heavenly songs, eternal triumphs, and hallelujahs of saints, and glorious angels in your Father's house, where you will have fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, Psal. xvi. 11.

7. Consider, how sudden, violent, or unexpected your end may be: therefore, let none

think or say they shall die in their nest, or promise themselves a time of preparation by a long life, or lingering sickness, consumption, or such like. Fearless, careless sinners, you do not know what a night, or what an hour may bring forth: the rich man in the gospel, while he dreamed of many days, was arrested by a killing and dreadful message, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, Luke xii. 20. He lives not that knowest where, when, or how he shall die; some have gone to bed well and died the same night; others have dropped dead from their houses; some have died at their tables, whilst the meat hath been at their mouths; others have died in their full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet, with breasts full of milk, and bones moistened with marrow: others die in the bitterness of their souls, and never eat with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them, when they are brought to the grave, and remain in the tomb. Sirs, there are many dreadful instances in the word of God, of the sad and sudden approach of this merciless messenger death, which stands as so many

sea-marks to give you warning, lest death should come in an hour you look not for it, and find you unprepared. The king of the Chaldeans, in his greatest jollity, and having not a thought of death, saw an hand-writing on the wall which was very terrible, and the same night was slain; while he was feasting and drinking wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, in the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candle-stick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote: then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled, and his knees smote one against another, Dan. v. 3—6, and 30. Death is the king of terrors and terror of kings. Good Hezekiah received a sudden summons for death, Isa. xxxviii. 1, which made him turn his face to the wall, pray and weep sore, and to chatter like a crane, and mourn like a dove, in the bitterness of his soul, because he was to go to the gates of the grave, and to the pit where there is no hope. The first-born in Egypt were slain at midnight, which made a great cry, Ex. xii. 29, 30. Korah and his

wicked company were swallowed up in the midst of their rebellion, Numb. xvi. 31, 32. They went down quick into the pit, and all Israel fled at the cry of them.

There died suddenly of them of Beth-shemesh, fifty thousand and threescore and ten, because they looked into the ark, 1 Sam. vi. 19. And God many times taketh away the desire of our eyes with a stroke, as he did Ezekiel's wife, Ezek. xxiv. 16. Job's children died at their banquet: Ishbosheth was smitten and died in his sleep: Ananias and Sapphira, being husband and wife, died within three or four hours one of the other, with a lie in their mouths, Acts v. 5, 10.

The righteous Judge many times shoots an arrow suddenly at wicked men, they die in the act of sin, Psal. lxiv. 7. When they are about to fill their bellies, the Lord doth cast the fury of his wrath upon them, as he did upon the chosen men of Israel, Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31. Many times God, to execute his fierce wrath, sends out his destroying angel, who will make dreadful work in a little time; for in one night in the camp of the Assyrians, the angel of the Lord smote an hundred and

fourscore and five thousand, that in the morning were all dead corses, Isa. xxxvii. 36. How short and uncertain is our life, subject every moment to the stroke of death, and which the least crumb or fly may put an end unto, as it hath to many! And as our end may be sudden, as also it may be violent; a mortal disease may invade both heart and head, and poor dying creatures many times are so distressed and distracted, that they cannot think of anything, but their tormenting pain, being incapable to say anything to God or man about their souls! O how stupid and insensible do many souls make their passage into the other world! like Nabal, or like a man in a lethargy, or as so many stocks or stones, and not awake till they awake in the flames of hell! The rich man died, and in hell he lift up his eyes: his first and second death was very unexpected. All you obdurate sinners, stand here and wonder at the matchless mercy and infinite patience of the great God, in delaying the king of terrors so long! God hath not dealt so kindly with thousands of sinners that are gone before into judgment, and who went down to the pit in a

moment; witness the last dreadful plague, by the means of which an hundred thousand souls were sent into eternity. O let not London nor England forget that, and other tremendous judgments, which our sins have called for, lest a worse than any yet should come upon us. The forgetting of our latter end is a deadly and provoking sin, and that which will hasten judgment. "Her filthiness is in her skirts —she remembered not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully—she had no comforter," Lam. i. 9.

8. Consider, that when death cometh to strike the stroke, your souls are stated, your eternity is cast without change for ever. Then your immortal souls are for salvation or damnation, for eternal life, or eternal death, for an eternal heaven, or eternal hell. You sadly besotted souls, know and remember while you have a day, before the golden thread of life be cut, that if you be found without Christ, faith, repentance, holiness, but a moment after death, you are undone to eternity. After death all means and hopes fail. There is no work or device in the grave, Eccles. ix. 10. God will then be irreconcileable, sin unpardon-

able, heaven not attainable, and your souls lost irrecoverably. And then the devil, your bloody adversary, will have his design upon you: he knoweth that if you be his in life and death, that you are his for ever, and that he and you shall never part. Sinners, this is certain, as the tree falleth, so it lieth; as is the seed, so will be the harvest; if you do the devil's work, you must have the devil's wages: if you march under the command and conduct of the prince of darkness, and suffer him to lead and hurry you hither and thither at his will whilst you live, you will be his prisoners and slaves in that dreadful dungeon of dismal darkness after you are dead.

Consider, the land of darkness is no place for service—there is no repenting in the grave —no Lord have mercy upon us, written on hell's gates, no Sabbaths, no sermons, no ministers there. It is in the time of life that you must labour and make preparation for eternal life; because according to your work and choice in this world will be your everlasting lot in the world that is to come: it is appointed for you once to die, and after death the judgment, Heb. ix. 27. The pale horse

death goeth before, and hell followeth after, Rev. vi. 8. There will be no change of your condition; the eternal ruin or eternal welfare of your precious souls depend on these few minutes; this swift stream of man's life after it once turneth or declineth, ever runneth with a perpetual ebb, never floweth again: so that all that you leave undone now, will be undone for ever. If you die unbelievers, you will be unbelievers for ever: if you die under the guilt and power of sin and wrath of God, you will remain under the guilt of sin and wrath of God for ever: but if you die holy, humble, mortified, sincere souls, you will remain holy, heavenly, and in the favour of God for ever, Rev. xxii. 11. He that is filthy, will be filthy still: and he that is holy, will be holy still: but the impenitent, unpardoned sinner, though he live an hundred or a thousand years in satisfying his lust, will be accursed at last. Poor sinners! that read this little treatise, let me beg you to be up and doing while it is day: the night will come wherein you nor no man can work, John ix. 4. Then to your work with might and main, while your candle is burning, your sun shin-

ing: will ye yet loiter, and see your glass running, your sun setting, yourselves dying, and your souls perishing? O seek the Lord while he may be found, Isa. lv. 6. In an acceptable time, 2 Cor. vi. 2. Before the day pass as the chaff, before the decree bring forth, before the evil day come, before they that look out at the windows be darkened, and the keepers of the house begin to tremble, before the doors be shut in the streets, and the silver cord be loosed or the pitcher broken at the fountain, before you are gone to your long home, and the spirit return to God who gave it.

Considcr with yourselves, are you fit to grapple with this mighty monarch death? Are you freighted for this long voyage, and ready and willing to pass through this dark entry? Take heed and fear, lest you be found unfit; think upon the sadly deluded virgins that had their oil to buy when their lamps should burn, and so came to the door, but found it shut; think on poor Esau that was hunting for venison while he lost the blessing.

Poor perishing souls! what do you intend to do? If you will work, it must be now or

never. Are you resolved to seek and secure the Kingdom of God first, Matth. vi. 33, whilst it is called to-day? Or will you bestow nothing but the dregs and snuffs of rotten old age upon God and your immortal souls? O that you might know in this your day the things which belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes.

9. Lastly, consider, that it is the most dreadful and amazing sight on this side hell, to see a Christless unbeliever breathing out his last: there are other sad sights, viz. to see a man starving for want of bread, or dying for want of a physician, or drowning for want of a boat, or to see a man dead a corpse, a body without a soul; but ah! how sad and astonishing a spectacle it is, to see a man near the coast of eternity, viz. to behold a wretched sinner in his cold sweats and dying groans, with his precious and immortal soul standing on his pale, cold, quivering lip, and death, the great conqeror and king of terrors, marching furiously with his writ of remove in one hand (not to be reversed,) and his deadly dart and sting in the other hand; conscience on the rack, barking, biting, and tearing him

like a lion: the devil, God's executioner, looking on and standing by; the heart under dejecting and sinking despair, the eyes dim and fixed, his heart strings ready to break with anguish: his wife, children, and friends at the bed-side, weeping, sighing, crying, wrining their hands, beating their breasts; the wife crying out, alas, my husband! the child crying out, alas, my father! the poor perishing soul all this while looking backward upon his misspent time and by-past sins, inward upon his own heart—a dreadful sight! where he seeth no Christ, no grace, no purity, nothing but sin, guilt, death, darkness: then looking upward to that God that has been provoked, to that Christ that hath been rejected, to that heaven and eternity that he hath lost; and looking downward to that dark and dreadful pit, that must be his place and portion, (with a fearful looking for judgment) seeing the devils come and ready to seize upon him. O what a dreadful out-cry and shriek will the soul make when it departs! Perceiving itself sinking down, down to the burning lake and bottomless pit, where he must take up his lodging with devouring fire to all eternity.

The pangs of death, the world's loss, anguish of conscience, and frights of hell meeting together, will make a man perfectly miserable, and force him to cry but with cursed Cain, Gen. iv. 13, "My punishment is greater than I can bear:" or to say (with the sadly afflicted church) "behold, no sorrow like unto my sorrow." And if the dreadful reflection of a guilty accusing conscience be so tormenting here, what will the whole flame and sea of wrath be when poured out to the very outmost.

Senseless sinners! consider, this may be your doleful case when you come to die, viz. to have much sorrow and wrath with your sickness, Isa. xlviii. 22. For there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God: not one word in all the Bible, but speaks terror in life and death, though the sinner live an hundred years he shall be accursed: he dieth under all the curses written in God's book; yea under that most dreadful gospel-curse, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. The apprehension of which will cause such distraction of spirit, and sad reflection of guilt, which will make them curse their God and their king, looking down to the pit, roar-

ing out, who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Therefore, be wise to consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver, Psal. l. 22.

And as it is dreadful and amazing to see the unbeliever dying, so on the contrary it is comfortable and reviving to see the godly man dying, because his *ultimum* is his *optimum*, his last is his best: the day of his death, is better than the day of his birth, Eccles. vii. 1. His end is peace, Psal. xxxvii. 37.

God at at peace, conscience at peace, and all at peace! O blessed sight, to see the heaven-born panting soul going out of the world upon the wings of joy, calmness and serenity of spirit, with full sail to heaven, longing and crying out, make no tarrying, O my God, haste my beloved, haste; so come Lord Jesus: I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is best of all, Philip. i. 23. You have heard what are the great things to be considered, namely, that an end will certainly be; this world is no place of

continuance: they that now see you, ere long will see you no more for ever: you have heard that your present things will perish, that sin so full of deadly poison will leave a sting, a dart that will strike through your liver, and that the case of the wicked will be doleful, dreadful, yea desperate, when they come to die: for when death comes, your souls then will be stated so, as there can be no alteration to eternity.

The next thing is to speak to the reasons why it is a duty and matter of such moment to consider; which are these following:—

Reason 1. Is taken from God: because the only wise, gracious, most indulgent, and soul compassionating God wisheth it, and that most vehemently. O that they were wise! that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! Sirs, in this pathetical option or drsire, there are the very tender bowels of God, there is the very language of his heart, and it is as if he had (after the manner of men) spoken thus to his faithful servant Moses, I have but one wish or request, and all is comprehended in this one, viz. that thou shouldst go and tell them

from me, that they must be wise to consider this, to remember the days of old, and the years of many generations, what I have done for them above all nations in the world to be my treasure, portion, and peculiar people; and because I love them, I have delievered them, wrought wonders for them in Egypt, the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, and have kept them as tenderly as the apple of mine eye, carrying them upon eagle's-wings; but yet let them know, that they have forgotten me, provoked me, and that their end is like to be miserable: for a fire is kindled in mine anger, and unless they do speedily consider, it will burn to the lowest hell.

Now, you souls in peril, which is best; to thwart, cross and grieve your well-wishing, dearest, best, and only friend? or to please and gratify your professed deadly, implacable enemy? Your adversary the devil cannot endure that you should think of death or dying; for if Satan that old serpent would permit and suffer you to look into hell, he could neither drag nor draw you thither at his pleasure. And will you go on in your ways of sin and death? or bethink yourselves

whose you are, what you have done, whither you are going, and what is like to become of you when your breath is gone? what provision have you made for the other world, that so the great buisness between God and your souls may be made up?

Sinners! if the infinitely holy, just and righteous God did desire or design your ruin and destruction, he would not have excited you to this solemn and serious consideration of the end of sin, death and eternity, until it were too late, and you left without a remedy; so that what is hear intended hath a tendency to make you happy, if it be regarded, O that they were wise! &c.

Reason 2. Because a deep, serious, and heart-affecting consideration of death and the grave, will both realize it, and represent it as near, even at the door, and make it to staud in open view. Whereas things looked upon at a distance, whether they be good or whether they be evil, have but a little, if any influence; now a fixed and hearty consideration will give (as it were) a being to future things, and bring them near, so that you may really converse with those things.

A truly godly man that hath a view of unseen things by divine contemplation, here upon the wings of faith and hope he may ascend up to heaven, and walk a turn in the goldens streets of the new Jerusalem; as the prophet Ezekiel was in the vision of God at Jerusalem in his mind, when his body was by the river Chebar, among the captives in the land of the Chaldeans; so likewise those sadly wounded spirits, who through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage, being exercised with soul conflicts, and under powerful cutting and killing convictions of sin and misery, have such dark dismal thoughts and apprehensions of hell and the wrath of God, which makes them ever and anon to enter into the chambers of death, and visit the prisoners of the pit, and look upon that black gulf and fiery furnace to be so near that they are on the brink of it, falling down continually: this hath been the cause of many of God's precious ones, who are now in heaven above all these fears and frights, that were once more bitter than death. And O! how many travelling with these pangs and agonies of soul, are ready to cry

out with holy Job, chap. vi. 4. " The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison wherof drinketh up my spirits: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." Such is the nature of meditation, or consideration, that it will cause future and remote things to have a real powerful and deep impression upon our minds. As for instance,

A merchant in India, by his meditation or contemplation, may converse with his affairs, his wife, children and friends in England; or a merchant that is walking on the exchange in London, may have his mind or thoughts in Spain or Italy, or elsewhere. A malefactor cast into prison for some notorious crime, may long before the assizes converse with the sad circumstances of his trial; he may in his thoughts see himself brought to the bar, standing before a terrible judge to hear his indictment read, the charge proved, his doom and sentence pronounced, and see (as it were) himself at the place of execution, with the rope about his neck, which must immediately hang him. And if you would in good earnest set yourselves to consider your latter end, you

may really and heart-affectingly converse with old age, weakness, sickness, your death-bed, short breathing, cold-sweats, dying-pangs and groans, winding-sheet, coffin, and see yourselves (as it were) stretched, out, nailed up, and on the shoulders of men, carrying you to the grave, where worms and filthy vermin must feed upon you.

The servants of God, and saints of old have done this with great success, and soul-advantange, and so should you. They have reckoned or counted their lives by days, because they were every day liable to death and expected it daily: teach us to number our days, said Moses, Psalm. xc. 12. Few and evil have the days of my life been, said old Jacob. For man that is born of a woman is of few days, Job xiv. 1. All the days of my appointed time, said Job, will I wait till my change come, Job xiv. 14. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house (a dark house) appointed for all living. And chapter xvii. 1. He said, my breath is corrupt—my days are extinct—the grave is ready for me: wherever he went or came, he was looking for a grave. Again, by considera-

tion, we may not only look to the grave, but beyond it—to the great transactions and astonishing things that shall be after death. We may converse with the world's burning, Christ's coming, the trumpet's sounding, the grave's opening, the dead's rising, the wicked's roaring, who, as jolly as they are, shall then cry to dead and deaf mountains and rocks to fall on them, to hide them from God; for in that great day of his fierce and terrible wrath they will not be able to stand, Rev. vi. 16, 17.

By this realizing, believing consideration, we may see the Judge standing behind the door, and the Son of God (as it were) ready to break forth of the clouds, with power and great glory, as Hierom did, who said, whether I eat or drink, I hear this voice in my ears, Arise ye dead and come to judgment. Now if a right consideration of the great things to come be so penetrating and heart-awakening, let death, which always doggeth you at your heels, be often upon your thoughts: your heads and hearts too should be much upon it; every night you lie down, and every morning you rise, let there be some serious and awful

thoughts of death and eternity. That which many have engraven on their rings, viz. Remember to die, let it be by the pen of a diamond written on your hearts. It is storied of Philip of Macedon, that he laid a charge upon one of his servants to come every morning into his chamber, and proclaim this, that he was mortal: and if a heathen was so careful of keeping the memory of his mortality, much more should a Christian. We should always remember the days of darkness, and keep life and death, heaven and hell before us; there being but a step between us and death. The neglect and want of this was Israel's sin, and Jerusalem's too; she did not remember her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully, Lam. i. 9. And this God, who would have us remember and consider, doth sadly complain of by the prophet, Isa. i. 3. calling heaven and earth to witness for him; "Hear, O heaven! and give ear, O earth! the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

Reason 3. A serious consideration of your latter end, through grace, will prove an abso-

lute and sovereign antidote to expel the greatest evil, yea, a means to escape an infinite loss, viz. sin, and the dreadful effects and consequences of it.

What is the cause of that inundation and sea of wickedness, and most prodigious sins that are now in the world, and in this nation, in every city, town, and place, and in most families, among all ranks and degrees of men, viz. magistrates, ministers, people, parents, children, masters, servants, but this, their not only duly and deeply considering their latter end? This we find laid down in the word of God, to be one main ground of all sins, and of the neglect of duties.

You careless souls! did you believe and remember that you must die, and come to judgment, that your naked souls, and naked sins must shortly stand before the most tremendous, direful Judge of quick and dead, the reflection hereof would be as a knife to your throats, as a sword to your breasts, or as a hand-writing on the wall, to retard or hinder your constant and desperate course of wickedness.

O! what horrid, hellish outrages are now committed, and that deliberately, impudently,

obstinately, even against the light of nature, conscience, scripture? What cursing, lying, swearing, blaspheming, Sabbath-breaking, cheating, cozening, stealing! what wantonness, filthiness, uncleanness, swinish drunkenness, covetousness, earthly mindedness! What mocking, scoffing, wrath, envy, malice, pride, passion, and spiritual wickedness too: as unbelief, atheisim, impenitency, hypocrisy, apostacy, hatred, of God, his people, Ministers, ways and ordinances, every where aboundeth! Men declare their sin like Sodom, and are not ashamed of the unfruitful works of darkness; and why? But because they do not set their minds and hearts upon their latter end.

Poor dying sinners! let me out of tender compassion to your bleeding and almost sinking souls, intreat you as for the Lord's sake, to go down to the grave, to go down to hell to your thoughts, and stop here, and think of the approach of devils, the burning lake, the bottomless pit, the loss of God, of Christ, of heaven and your precious souls; remember those fiery, scourging, endless flames, the presence and company of devils, reprobates, and damned spirits; and your sweet morsels shall be gall

and wormwood to you. These amazing things being truly reflected on, will be as lightning in your eyes, thunder in your ears, as thorns, darts, and swords in your flesh, as poison in your bowels, as fire in your bones, to compel and force you speedily to curb and check the reins of your hellish lusts, that so you might fly from the wrath to come.

Did you but view that dark and cold grave, and hot hell that is so near, you would rather starve or die, than run to that excess of riot; you could not sleep and snort, dance and sport upon the pit's brink, under such a consideration.

But forget all this, banish the thoughts of God, death and hell, and you will run and rush into sin, as a horse into the battle, Luke xli. 45, crying, peace! peace! till danger, death and destruction come, 1 Thes. v. 3.

This was that mighty sin that ripened Jerusalem for her ruin, and brought her down wonderfully; her filthiness is in her skirts, she remembereth not her last end. The Lord complaineth by the prophet Isaiah of the same thing, "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." But what follows, "Ah sinful

nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy one of Israel." Compare Lam. i. 9. with Isa. i. 3, 4.

But he that doth that which is lawful and right, shall save his soul alive. Who is that? He that considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall save his soul; whosoever doth perish, that man shall never perish, Ezek. xviii. 14, 28.

Reason 4. The consideration of your latter end will be a powerful incentive to make you exert and put forth the greatest industry in a way of duty; yea, it will certainly have an influence upon all our duties, and upon all our graces: for considering and doing are frequently joined together, Psal. xiv. 1. Prov. xxxi. 16. She considereth a field, and buyeth it. I thought on my ways, or considered my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies, Psal. cxix. 59. Lam. iii. 40. Heb. x. This, if any thing, will make you serious, diligent, and constant in any duty, and to work while it is day, before the night cometh, wherein no man can work.

The Apostle exhorts, to consider one another, to provoke to love and good works; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching, Heb. x. 24, 25. The rememberance of the day of our death and of our passing into eternity, with a deep impression of it upon the heart, and will be as a voice of thunder, speaking to the secure senseless sinner, Awake, awake, thou that sleepest, open thine eyes, stand upon thy feet, and behold and see what a sea of blood and wrath is here! see and believe, believe and consider, consider and fear, fear and fly, and make haste in thy work; thy work is great and weighty, diversions are many, adversaries are strong, thy strength is small, thy time is short, thy account is great, death and judgment are at the door, therefore up and be doing, now or never.

You slow and slothful souls! let your apparent and inevitable danger suddenly provoke and spur you unto duty, to seek the Lord in a time accepted, before the door of life be shut, God withdrawn, and mercy quite gone.

The profanest seaman will sigh, mourn, pray, promise, vow, if death and danger look him in the face. When the ship was like to

be broken, and death threatened immedia
to surprize them, the mariners were
afraid, and cried every one to his God.
this the very light of nature dictated to
ship-master, though a heathen, that the
was no season to sleep—What meanest th
O sleeper, arise and call upon thy God, i
be that God will think upon us that we pe
not, Jonah i. 6. And the most notori
thieves and murderers will pray in prison,
when they come to the gallows, the place
execution.

When the most righteous Judge sent
destroying angel to the city of London,
other places in the year '65, for the drea
fear of which, many thousands did flee
many thousands did fall, viz. the carcasse
men like dung upon the ground, and as ha
fuls after the harvest-man—when death
knock at a thousand doors in one night
what confession of sin, fastings, cryings,
importunate knocking was there at the thr
of grace! And it may be by many per
and families that prayed but little befor
since, that God would pity, pardon and
move that amazing weeping judgment, w

is now almost forgotten. Upon an awakening apprehension of Nineveh's fatal ruin, the king and his nobles decreed and proclaimed a fast, and enjoined every one to cry mightily to God, Jonah iii. 8.

Sinners! were you but truly sensible of your peril, you would pray to purpose, viz. more ardently, more inwardly, more deeply, more affectionately, than ever you have done. It was a supposed danger, and that of death, that caused Jacob to weep and make supplication; for Esau hated Jacob, and said in his heart, the days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 41. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed, Gen. xxxii. 7. Which made him be importunate with God, for deliverance, and he prevailed, Gen. xxxii. 28. Hosea xii. 48. Poor sinners! your case is dangerous, I will not say desperate, but you are ignorant of it; you do not know that you are poor, miserable, blind, and naked; were you but sensible that you are liable to the wrath of God, the stroke and sting of death every moment, it would constrain you to cry mightily to God for pardon. Holy Job, when

he considered of death and judgment, set prayer to work, and said, why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity for now shall I sleep in the dust? O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret till thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me, Job vii. 21, and xiv. 13. —This made also these two gracious kings, Hezekiah and David, to weep and pray in the bitterness of their souls: in those days was Hezekiah sick unto death; and Isaiah the prophet came unto him, and said, thus saith the Lord, set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and wept sore, and prayed to the Lord, Isa. xxxviii. 1, 2, 3.

David, when the sorrows of death compassed him, and the pains of hell got hold of him, then said he, I called upon the Lord; O Lord I beseech thee, deliver my soul, Psal. cxvi. 3, 4. Jonah, that could sleep in the ship, prayed in the whale's belly, out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardst my voice, Jonah ii. 2. The apostle Peter, and Christ himself, presseth prayer from the con-

sideration of the end of the world; the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer, 1 Pet. iv. 7. And pray, saith Christ, that ye may escape all these things, and stand before the Son of Man, Luke xxi. 36. Neither doth our dear Lord Jesus press that on us which he did not practise; for being sensible of the bitter and most dreadful cup of his Father's wrath, he prayed, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass, Matth. xxvi. 39.

Sinners! let me tell you, as secure and senseless as you are, an awakening impression of approaching death and judgment upon your souls, will be as the cry at midnight, to excite and stir you up to get in your oil, and to trim your lamps. The virgins, both wise and foolish, were all asleep and secure enough until that sudden and amazing cry was heard, Behold the bridegroom cometh—go ye forth to meet him, Matth. xxv. 6. Then they all arose and trimmed their lamps. It is the storm and rain that hastens the bees into the hive, that brings the traveller into the inn, the ship into the harbour: so likewise the sense of death, the dead and drowsy professor

into prayer. In their afflictions they will seek me early, Hosea v. 15.

An heart-affecting meditation of unchangeable eternity, will be as a voice from the clouds, crying, haste sinners, haste, post-haste; haste as for thy life in the work of faith and repentance, in parting with sin, and closing with Jesus Christ, without there will be no hope. Noah was moved with fear, and prepared, and got into the ark, to the saving of his house, when the secured, deluded world died by the deluge. Heb. xi. 7. Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, 2 Cor. v. 11.

You wretched sinners! that will not believe or consider, until you are just dropping into the pit: if you had but a little cranny to look into the other world, how violent and resolute would you be in the speedy prosecution of your known duty? You would examine, prove, and try yourselves; you would read, hear, meditate, watch, pray, repent, fear, love, obey, more than ever. Did you see the night will come, is coming, and that the days of darkness shall be many; *Whatsoever* ye do, you will do it with your

might, Eccles. ix. 10. Now, before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, seek ye the Lord; for how shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation? Zeph. ii. 2, 3.

Reason 5. You are to consider your latter end, because here lyeth your highest wisdom: O that they were wise, &c. If you would be so wise as to exceed all the wisest men, greatest statesmen and politicians in the world, it must be in considering of, and preparing for your end. Sirs, in this you are most concerned, because thereby you will promote your own interest; for it will make a man profitable to himself, wise for himself, Job xxii. 2. Prov. ix. 12. It is true wisdom to understand this, viz.—To be wise to that which is good, Rom. xvi. 19.—To be wise in Christ, to secure the chiefest good, is the best wisdom.

There are many worldly wise men, who, while they live, provide for every thing but death, and they are often ready to die before they begin to live, in a spiritual sense: and is it not a very unfit and sad season to pre-

pare for death, when it is a burden to live? and indeed such are the many evils attending old age, that men can have no pleasure in them, Eccles. xii. 1. And shall these be accounted the only wise men, that are but wise in their generations to get the world to pursue lying vanities, and forsake their own mercies; to hew out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water, and forsake the fountain of living water? this is to prefer pebbles before pearls, to gain faith, and to lose heaven, Jer. ii. 13. Jonah ii. 8. Matt. xvi. 26. To be happy for a time and miserable to eternity.

True wisdom and serious consideration is exercised about things good and evil: yea, it is conversant about the best good, how it may attain it; and about the worst evil, how it may impede, avoid, and escape it, choosing the most adequate and effectual means to bring it to pass. This excellent divine wisdom is proper and profitable to direct, Prov. x. 10. And so doth every considering godly man while he lives, fast and firmly secure that which he hath of greatest value, viz., a precious soul, more worth than any thing he

stands possessed of. If all the rocks were pearls, all the earth and heaven gold, or if all the waters in the vast ocean were converted into crystal, or the most precious stones in the world, and put all in one scale, and the soul into the other scale, the soul would weigh it all down. Our dear Lord tells us, that the gaining of the whole world is an invaluable consideration to the loss of one soul, Matth. xvi. 26. So that he must be wise indeed, that hath gotten a cabinet for this rare incomparable jewel, where it will be for ever safe. He that winneth souls is wise, saith the wisest of all mere men, Prov. xi. 30. And sure then he is so that saves his own. Again he that considereth his end, is in the very way to procure and make the best friend, that will certainly stand him in stead to purpose, and in the greatest peril, viz., God, Christ, angels, saints, conscience, scripture, his real friends. When one breach is made up between God and the poor soul, who can harm or hurt him? If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. viii. 31. I will lay me down and sleep in peace, Psal. iv. 8. Moreover He provided against the

greatest wants, by laying up for a spending time. There was not a man to be found in all Egypt so wise as Joseph, who, forseeing their want, filled the storehouses against the years of famine; he that gathereth his meat in the summer, saith Solomon, is wise, Prov. x. 5. Consider the time of youth is your summer: old age, a sick bed, is not a gathering, but a spending time: and you are not wise, wise towards God, wise for your precious souls, that do not make it your business to trade and lay up a stock and store against that time. Many a silly soul, like the wanton grasshopper, leaps and skips, chirps and sings all the summer, and when the winter cometh, perisheth for want: but the truly serious and considering soul, like the laborious bee, or ant, toils or labours in the summer: and that man might put off both, and learn his duty, and so provide for the time to come, Solomon sends him to the ant: go to the ant thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise, which provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest, Prov. vi. 6. 8.—And so the wise in heart, that trade for eternity, lay up the best supplies against

the evil day, which are the favour of God, an interest in Christ, pardon of sin, peace of conscience, a stock of prayers, rich and choice experiences, and love tokens of their Father's favour, the evidences of their heavenly country. This is the hidden and heavenly treasure of the godly man, who only is called the man of wisdom, Micah vi. 9.

Besides, he preventeth the worst of evils, viz., the guilt of sin, the sting of death, sorrows of hell, terrors of conscience, the wrath of God, the loss of God, his soul, and heaven. This infinite and irreparable evil or loss he shall never sustain, because this timely consideration of death and judgment will be a means to fit him for it: "They that were ready went in to the marriage," Matth. xxv. 10

But you that are careless of your immortal souls, that think not of death, that will not consider your latter end (if infinite mercy do not speedly prevent,) you will certainly die without wisdom; if you do not seasonably secure your souls, make God and Christ your friends, while the poor people of God lay up a treasure in heaven, a good foundation against the time to come, you will treasure

up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Rom. ii. 5. And this is the doleful case of many worldly wise men, and of those too whose office and employment is to keep (if it might be) others alive, viz., to cure diseases, and prevent death. It is observed concerning Paracelsus, a great physician, a man very skilful in chemical experiments, that he bragged and boasted that he had attained to such wisdom in descerning the constitutions of men, and in studying remedies, that whosoever did follow his rules, and keep his directions, should never die by any disease: casually he might, and of age he must: but he would undertake to secure his health against diseases. A bold and most presumptuous undertaking: but he who by art promised to protect others, could not, by his art, make himself a protection in the prime of his age, who died before, or when he had lived but thirty years.

Poor mortals! sith that you cannot prevent death, it is your wisdom to prepare for it: and for as much as you cannot by any means, power or skill, keep off the stroke of death,

get while you may a remedy or antidote against the sting or death, that when you die you may not die unprepared, or die without wisdom: for man that is in honour that understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish, Psal. xlix. 20.—So did the miserable mistaken rich man, who (though by himself or others judged wise) in the account of the only wise God, was a very fool, who for providing only for the time of life, and not for death, did deserve the name of, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required," Luke xii. 20. A dark and dreadful night indeed, in which he lost both worlds at once, earth and heaven too. And will you say, that you are wise? and not consider what your end shall be. The five virgins are called follish virgins. But why? Because they did not make provision for the bridegroom's coming; and when they came to the door, it was shut upon them. Ah! sad and dreadful disappointment!

But the diligent and prepared soul that hath gotten in his oil, and made all ready, is in a capacity to look upon death with a smiling aspect, because the deadly poison and sting is out; and it can but kill the body—it

is not able to hurt the soul: but the sleep secure sinner will be dreadfully surprised, as Belshazzar was by the hand-writing that appeared on the wall: the terrifying and amazing sight of which changed his countenance, and troubled his thoughts; so that neither his wine, his wives, or his concubines could comfort him, who had lifted up himself against the Lord of heaven, Dan. v.

Sinners! consider the king of terrors is a terrible sight, and to none more than to those that have their heaven here: it will be to them as the tearing of their caul from their very hearts—worse than cutting off a member from the body: for many have suffered the loss of members, to save their lives: O death! death! death! how bitter! bitter! is the remembrance of thee to the man that is at ease in his possesions? And let me tell you evils and dangers, by how much the more sudden and unexpected they are, by so much the more dreadful and astonishing they are. What a sad and hideous cry was there in Egypt, when at midnight God smote their first-born; and also when the earth opened *her mouth* and swallowed up Korah and his

cursed company, that went down alive into the pit, in so much that all Israel fled at the cry of them; for they said, lest the earth swallow us up also? Numb. xvi. 31, 32, 33. And how terrible was that sudden shower of fire and brimstone upon filthy Sodom, after a bright sun-shiny morning? Gen. xix. 24. So when grim and ghastly death cometh in a black night, and draweth the curtain, and looketh upon the secure sinner, it will be very formidable; for who can look death in the face, that dare not look God or his own conscience in the face? But the sincerely godly man fitted for death, may look and live above the fear of death and hell, and welcome death, as old Jacob did the waggons that his son Joseph sent to carry him down to Egypt: and when he saw the waggons, the spirit of Jacob their father revived, Gen. xlv. 27. Death, though a grim porter, will open the gate of glory to every believer, and let them unto their father's house; for both life and death are theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 22. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, Rev. xiv. 13. To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, Philip. i. 21. *Whoso is* wise, will observe these

things. These are the reasons why your latter end must be considered.

The Application.

If it be a duty so necessary to mind your end, I shall descend to improve it by way of application.

Use 1. This calls aloud unto all you unconverted sinners, that have made no preparation for death and judgment, to stand and wonder, and sit down and admire at the unwearied patience, the matchless and amazing mercy of the infinitely gracious God.

Hath the most righteous, just, and sin-revenging God, held your souls in life, and kept you from death and hell to this very day? and will you not even to astonishment adore the unsearchable riches of grace? Men commonly wonder at things above their reach, or that for which they can give no reason, and especially a rare, singular, and unmerited mercy. Now stop a little, and spend a few serious thoughts, and consider what reason can be given that you should he numbered among the living, when so many are dead; *that you* should be in the world, and so

many thousands of men, women and children in their graves, and their precious souls you know not where. Now that your bodies are not laid up in that dark and dismal prison of the grave, and your dear and never-dying souls bound, fettered, and chained in that direful, painful prison of hell, is matter of the greatest wonder in all the world. Have ye not cause to doubt, that many of your neighbours, relations, and sinful companions and acquaintances are gone down thither, and it may be some of those you least suspect? and you know not how many are now in flames for the very same sins that you stand guilty of, if not less sinners than yourselves. O admire and bless God with your whole souls, that you are yet on this side of the grave, and not gone down into that place of torment; you enjoy many opportunities for your souls; and are still exhorted to part with sin, to turn to God, to accept of Christ, to think of death and hell, that so you might never see it or feel it; for there is much more in the pains of hell and wrath of God, than ever you heard or can imagine: according to thy fear (said *Moses*) *so is* thy wrath, Psal. xc. 11.

Poor sinners! you are still the living monuments of infinite kindness; and therefore let not the living man complain. Suppose you had died when death seemed near, when you were sick and weak, ready to give up the ghost, or when those many thousands died by the plague or sword, in what a miserable condition had your souls been, to be shut up with devils and damned spirits, in the lake that burneth with fire and, brimstone! And will you still maintain your enmity, increase iniquity, and even dare God to damn you? Sinners! are ye not beside yourselves? yea stark mad, to make God, that should be your best friend, your worst foe? for if his anger be kindled but a little, it will burn to the lowest hell, and none can quench it, or stand before it. Can thine heart endure, or thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee? Ezek. xxii. 14, Who can dwell with devouring fire? who would, saith the Lord, set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Isa. xxvii. 4. O when will ye come to your*selves,* and throw away your arms, and

consider your ways? or will you not be saved? when shall it once be? why will ye die? let these cords of love draw you, and cause you to say, behold we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.

Consider others' dreadful ruin have been your warning, that are now locked up in that dark dungeon, and shall come up no more, and whom the devils are now tormenting, the worm biting, and the fire burning. You are at present free from the boiling cauldron, and in the land of the living: O praise, praise the Lord, for his long-suffering, you being but, as it were, under a reprieve: O prize and improve your life, and timely prepare for death: for if thy life were ended, thy soul separated, and no peace with God made, thou wert an undone soul: there is no place for repentance in the grave, no Christ or pardon to be obtained in hell. Bless God your glass runneth, your lamp burneth, the day of grace is yet continued, your dear Lord is upon the mercy-seat; therefore there is hope.

Use 2. This justly reprehended all that slight or neglect this great duty, but especially these *three sorts;* none of which do seriously *connsider their* latter end, viz.,

1. The insolent atheistical sensualists.
2. The ignorant and inconsiderate.
3. The self-confident and presumptuous.

1. It condemneth atheistical sensualists, that put the evil day far from them, Amos vi. 3. and who drown or banish the awful thoughts of God, death, and eternity, out of their minds and hearts. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ, and say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways, Job xxi. 12, 13. God is not in all their thoughts, Psal. x. 4. They are resolved for a short life, and a merry, whatever be the dreadful issue; they chaunt to the sound of the viol and drink wine in bowels, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and stretch themselves upon their couches, saying in their hearts, as that wretch, Luke xii. 19, Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry: they will satisfy their lusts, enjoy the pleasures of the flesh, walk in the way of their hearts, and in the sight of their eyes: and hereby they make the breach wider, and themselves seven times more the children of the devil, though *at last* they sit down in everlasting sorrow.

Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

You poor desperately deluded souls, did you believe what you have read and heard of the other world, or what the Scriptures of infallible verity speaketh of the infinitely holy, great and terrible God, who will in nowise clear the guilty, you would quickly change your course, did you now consider you must die, and be judged: that in a very little time you which hear me this day, must stand before the dreadful God, would you sin so freely, love the world so immoderately, mock at the Deity, jeer at serious piety, neglect your duty, trifle away your time, forget eternity, and hazard those your precious souls, as you have done and do? Such rake-hells, and devils incarnate, the apostle speaketh of, 2 Pet. iii. 3. Know this first, *i. e.* before the end of the world, there shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying, where is the promise of his coming? Nevertheless, these vipers, vile miscreants, and monsters in men's shapes, think that they are wise, when indeed they have no understanding: wise they are, but it is to do evil, to cavil *against the* truth, dispute against a life

of holiness; but to do good they have no knowledge, Jer. iv. 22.

This was Jerusalem's great sin, immediately before the fierce anger of the Lord came upon them; and this is the sad and dreadful case of many; yea, thousands in the world, and in these nations; notwithstanding all those awakening desolating providences, and amazing spectacles of mortality their eyes have seen.

There are but a few that look upon themselves as concerned at all, just like a company of simple sheep in a fat pasture; the butcher cometh and fetcheth one to-day, another to-morrow, the rest feed on, and take no notice of what is become of their lost companions. It is as if a company of condemned persons, reprieved for a time, should be appointed to be executed one after another, within the space of so many days. This day the first in order is brought forth and executed, the day following a second; yet all the rest that are to take their turns, fall a drinking, carding, swearing, singing, and so continue till the very last, until they be all hanged, dead, and damned. We may compare this mad deluded world to *a company* of poor blind men, dancing about

the brink of a very dangerous deep pit, but do not perceive it, or see how each falleth in one after the other; a first, second, and third drops down—the rest not discerning the danger, run the round: I shall thus apply it—this day or hour, a swearer tumbleth down to hell, the next a drunkard: this evening or morning, the pale horse mounteth one, it may be a cursed atheist, or a malicious bloody persecutor, or a filthy adulterer, or an idolatrous worldling, and carrieth him to the place of darkness; the next day he receiveth his commission to fetch some more of them; those their brethren in iniquity that are left behind, keep and continue their course, and dance about the pit, not considering they must die, and come to judgment. How little do the living lay to heart this great business of their mortality, in so much that when they would deny a thing with greatest confidence, they will commonly say, they thought no more of it than of their dying day, as if death were not a matter of any moment, but rather a mere toy or trifle not to be regarded—she remembereth not her last end, Lam. i. 9.

You self-destroying sinners! do you know

that you must die and leave the world for ever? And are you so stupified and mad as not to think of death in many days together; yea, hardly to entertain a serious thought of death and judgment at a house of mourning? In the very sight of the dead you can be vain, frothy, jest, pot, pipe, feast, discourse of the world: a sad proof that men do not consider of their latter end. Some at that solemn and sad season seem a little serious, but as soon as the dead corpse is removed, and the grave and coffin out of sight, death is no more remembered. To make you sensible of this folly, let me reason with you in a few plain hints.

What! no thoughts of death, you that have been under a sentence of death, and brought to the very pit's brink, looking into eternity! O how sad it is to think how quickly those thoughts and impressions of your mortality have worn out, and passed away!—Sinners! remember and forget not those secret vows, promises, and engagements you then made to God, viz., that ye would part with sin, leave your wicked company, sit loose to the world, live godly, and make it your business to be religious, and lose no

more of your precious time and opportunities for your souls: if you have forgotten it, the all-seeing and heart-searching God remembers it. Know and consider in thy heart, that death that did but warn thee then, by sending his summons, will shortly come himself.

Forgetful of death, and made of dust, born of a woman, and under a decree not to be revoked by men or angels! Heb. ix. 27. Job xiv. 5. "As for man, his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee: thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass over."

Not to mind your death! you that have sickly, weak diseased bodies, full of pains and aches, that are so many partial quotidian deaths; yea, dying daily. What, put off the thoughts of death? Thou that hast been at so many funerals, heard so many passing bells or knells, seen so many graves, skulls, and coffins before thine eyes! forget your death! And yet sinners, sinning daily, carrying the cause and sting of death in your bosoms; *Mors in corpore*, the body is dead because of sin, Rom. viii. 10. Thy body is but a body *of death, sin* hath killed it, the sentence is

past, Gen. iii. 19. The wages of sin is death, Rom. vi. 23. The soul that sins must die, Ezek. xviii. 20. What, put off this evil day! and dead in part, old and cold, having one foot in the grave, viz., feeble knees, trembling hands, wrinkled faces, gray or bald heads, the grave being ready for you. What! no more serious thoughts of death! and so many peices and parcels of yourself gone before to this long home! so many relations and children now asleep in the dust of death! are they buried in perpetual oblivion, never to be remembered more?

What, sinners! what, not think of death, death at thy very heels, and before thine eyes! whither can you direct your eyes, and not see that which preacheth, or representeth death? All the winter, death is on the trees in your gardens, in every flower; at your table, every day you feed on the flesh of dead creatures, to tell you that ye must die; and is not death in your beds every night!—What is sleep but the picture and image of cold death? And your beds, but the presentation of your dark graves?

O careless, besotted sinners, not to con-

sider of death! and have precious souls, that live or die, be saved or damned, to heaven or hell, to bliss or burning, to God or devils, to saints or cursed reprobates as soon as the breath is gone, which may be the next day or hour, this pale horse, death, hath the red horse, hell, following him, Rev. vi. 8. Lastly —what, not think of and prepare for death and called Christians, that profess you believe the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, a happiness beyond the grave. For if in this life only, (saith Paul) we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable, 1 Cor. xv. 19.

Poor hardened sinners! that now forget God, and the great and mighty concerns of your immortal souls, what will ye do in the day of your visitation? When the iniquity of your heels shall compass you about, and no friend in heaven above, or in earth beneath, that can stand you in stead? And when conscience, like a bold sturdy sergeant, shall take you by the throat, and summon you, in the name of the great Judge, to come and stand at or before the judgment seat. Understand, ye brutish among the people, and ye fools, when

will ye be wise? Psal. xxxiv. 8. To understand this, to provide for your latter end?

2. This blames the ignorant, pettish and inconsiderate soul, who in an angry fit or passion wisheth for death out of a base end, viz. as a writ of ease or out-let to present pain, poverty, sickness, and other worldly troubles and perplexities, not rightly considering how terrible death is, or what the dreadful consequences of it are. Now, that you may be convinced of this sin and folly, give me leave to tell you, that between the worst, longest, and deepest miseries and calamities of this life, and those after death, there is no proportion, but an exceeding distance.

Poor deluded souls! what is the bite of a flea to the sting of a serpent? Or a scratch on the hand to a stab at the heart? What is the heat or smart of a little candle to a hot fiery furnace, or a devouring flame? What is a drop of gall to a sea or ocean of poison? Or what is pain, torture, anguish for an hour, to intolerable misery, time without end, into which, to the unconverted, death will certainly be the door? And are ye so mad to imagine *that there* is nothing in the other world to be

feared or felt, worse than outward pressures, perils, pains, which are but bodily miseries, and that but for a moment? This sin, not only the profane world are guilty of, but some of those that profess the name of God: Rebecca said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth, Gen. xxvii. 46. Rachel cries out, Give me children, or else I die, Gen. xxx. 1. Elisha being threatened by Jezebel, said, O Lord, take away my life, 1 Kings, 4. Jonah, for the loss of a gourd, said, It is better for me to die than to live, and told God to his very face that he did well to be angry, even unto death, Jonah iv. 9. The Israelites, when they wanted water, wished they had died in the wilderness. These and the like wicked wishes are in the mouths of many poor, ignorant, discontented persons, who long to be out of this wretched world.

Now, by way of conviction, I shall lay down these following particulars.

1. What think you of those inward and soul-straits and conflicts, wherewith God's poor afflicted people are sadly exercised? And were you but sensible of the guilt and weight of sin, a wounded spirit, and the wrath of

God, and those everlasting burnings, it would quickly swallow up your outward miseries, though never so many. This is evident in the example of the jailor, who for the loss of his prisoners was so tormented, that he would have killed himself before he was convinced of the dreadful state of his soul, that was in danger of ruin, Acts xvi. 27, 28, 29, 30.—Then he fell down and cried out, Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?

2. To wish for death, because of the evils attending this life, is very wicked and dangerous; interpretatively, and in effect it is to wish your souls in hell.

Consider and mind this also, that your present sorrows, crosses, troubles of what kind or degree soever they may be, are the fruit of your ill-doings, and far less than you deserve; for it is a wonder you are not in hell! and will you dare to be so audacious, as to fly in the face of your faithful Creator, when you should be deeply sensible of your horrible wickedness, and be humble under God's hand accepting the punishment of your sin, you should repent and turn to God: take away the *cause,* and the effect will cease.

3. You can please and gratify the devil your deadly adversary nothing more—you wish for death, so doth the devil too; if you are his now, you must be his then, his here, and his for ever; he waits and longs that your breath were gone, your souls separated; therefore he would have you poison, hang, drown, starve, or stab yourselves, that you might be dead, damned, and burned with him in hell.

4. Moreover, if you are dead, you would suddenly repent, and change your mind; and if it might be, give the world to be alive again, with all the wants, pains, and grief you now endure. Had you but a peeping-hole into hell, to see and hear what they endure, you would confess your sins, judge yourselves, and close with Christ before you die, that so you might not come into that dreadful place of torment. Now that you may hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly, let me ask you,

1. What think you of the sting and bitterness of death, when a man comes to die, conscience being awakened, roaring like a lion, *death the king* of terrors standing by, when

the guilt of past sins, and loss of precious time, will be as so many fiery darts, and stinging scorpions, biting and gnawing on the heart? what think you, it will be to die unconverted, to die in a state of sin and wrath, a traitor to God, in a state of unbelief and impenitency, the soul damning sins, to die with an evil heart, and an accusing conscience, self-condemned, cast in your own breasts, to die, to die, which is worst of all.

2. What think you of the sadness and amazing terror of approaching judgment, the second death; when a man comes to take a dreadful view of the other world, and begins to reflect and think, wherefore was I born? What have I been doing? are all these my sins? O where shall I leave them? or how shall I be rid of them, now I am dying? whither am I going? what will be my company? where shall be my place, and how near am I to it? what must I endure? and how long? how long? and conscience will answer, to eternity, misery without end. This will amaze, confound, or overwhelm the soul with fear and perturbation, when it sees that *heaven is lost*, and that it must down, down

to the region of darkness, and company of devils, in that state of everlasting woe. The killing thoughts of which made a great man wish, that he might live, though but the life of a toad.

3. What think you of the impartiality of the Judge, that will not spare the guilty? must and will judge, and sentence according to the fact, and reward every man according to his works? he would not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, 2 Pet. ii. 4, nor Adam, but cast him out of Paradise, and set a flaming sword against him; neither will he spare any impenitent sinner in the day of his wrath: justice obliges him to justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

4. What think you of the impossibility of having any appeal, there will be no Moses to mediate, no mediator to plead, no Daniel, Noah, Job, to intercede, or to stand in the gap, nor an intercessor in earth or heaven, to be found to speak a word. There can be no appeal to God: his calls and counsels have been refused, his interest opposed, his enemies countenanced, his laws violated, his anger

will burn like fire. No appeal to Jesus Christ: his government hath been slighted, and grace and person rejected: or to the Holy Ghost, he hath been quenched and grieved; or to angels and saints—all will be against you.

5. What think you of the resignation of soul and body to the executioner and tormentor, the red dragon? It is sad to see a poor malefactor committed to the jailor or hangman: but O how much more dreadful will it be for ever-living souls, in the face of men and angels, to be delivered into the hands of that raging, roaring lion the devil? when God the righteous Judge shall say in sight of the whole world, here are the men that broke my statutes, profaned my Sabbaths, that hated my saints, that served the devil in the satisfying their lusts, the open and professed adversaries to my name and interest, and that would not, though I often entreated them, come at my call, accept of my love, receive my Son, or endure a life of holiness, or by any means be drawn and persuaded to think of, and prepare for death and judgment, though they had time and opportunity enough. Now take them devil, and

away to hell with them, for my soul abhorreth them. Thy covenant-servants and voluntary slaves they were in time, and thy prisoners in chains of darkness they shall be to eternity, to be tormented day and night for ever, Rev. xx. 10.

6. What think you of eternal banishment and separation from God, Christ, angels, saints, heaven? this is the punishment of loss, and the worst of hell, Matth. xxv. 41, Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. O terrible! terrible! to be doomed or sentenced to lie under the wrath and hatred of the infinite great and dreadful God for ever and ever, as long as God shall live whose being is to eternity; as long as there is a devil to torment, or to be tormented, shall their plagues last. The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable murderers, whoremongers, liars, dogs, sorcerers, carry all their sins down to hell with them, the fuel that feeds the wrath of God; so that the oil of sin causes the lamps of wrath to burn and flame everlastingly. *The debt of sin* can never be repaid, justice

never satisfied, and the damned souls remain impenitent and God implacable; so that there can be no hope of pardon. The sentence is strict, unchangeable, irreversible, eternal. O eternity! eternity! this stings, plagues, and torments, and aggravates the most intolerable punishment of the damned: after innumerable thousands of years, they shall think it but the beginning of their sorrows, and shall be so far from an end, as if they had been in hell but an hour. It will be an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, 2 Thess. i. 9. In comparison of which, all the rendings, rackings, tearings, torturings of men's bodies here, by the most exquisite torments upon racks, gibbets, wheels, grid-irons, boiling lead, boiling oil, and other bloody invented engines and instruments of amazing cruelty, are but a flea biting.

Sinners! it is hell! hell! that will make the sadly tormented soul seek death, wish and long for that which will never be, Rev. ix. 6. And will you desire and wish for the woeful day? God forbid. Now your condition may be changed, then it will be stated: woe, woe *unto you that* desire the day of the Lord! to

what end is it for you; the day of the Lord is darkness and not light, Amos v. 18. A day of gloominess, a day of clouds, and of thick darkness, at which the people shall be much pained, and all faces shall gather blackness: the inhabitants of the land shall tremble, for the day of the Lord is very terrible, Joel ii. 2. Now, therefore, do not wickedly wish it, but wisely consider and prepare for it: and blessed is that servant whom, when his Lord cometh, he findeth so doing.

7. It reproves the self-confident and presumptuous, who conclude upon a fitness and preparedness for death and judgment, upon very slight and unwarantable grounds, namely, because they separate from the notoriously wicked, are not profane, make a profession, show some legal sorrow for sin, run the round of duty, though carnal and heartless enough in those duties: from hence they easily persuade themselves that all is well, viz. that they are the children of God, in a state of grace, going to heaven, and as fit to die as the very best. How many thousands are there in the Christian world, who securely *sleep, and dream* of an interest in Christ, that

hope and promise themselves a future and a glorious felicity, who are but mere moral men and worse, or rotten painted hypocrites at the best, having only a form of godliness, restraining, counterfeit, or common grace! Such Scribes and Pharisees are the foolish virgins, and yet confident to the very last; they came to the door with a Lord, Lord, open unto us. They had blazing lamps, but no oil in their lamps or vessels: no real union with Jesus Christ, no precious faith, no sincere love and evangelical repentance—the root of the matter was not in them.

You that have a name to live, take heed you be not deceived; if you are not truly united to Jesus Christ, he will certainly disown you. The Lord Jesus tells us of such sadly deluded souls, that shall stand up at the last day, and challenge a reward in heaven, to whom he will protest, I know you not, Matth. vii. 23. They never savingly knew him, had never any union or communion with Christ in the world: many are called, but few are chosen: the children of the kingdom, saith Christ, shall be cast out. And I must *tell you* whoever come to heaven, will miss

many there which they thought to find, and find others there they little expected.—The sinners in Zion are more than a few, the goats more than the sheep, the tares more than the wheat, more reprobate silver than pure tried gold: the pure in heart and truly godly man, that mourns and bleeds for sin, that loves God, and prizes Christ above the world, is many times full of fears and doubts about his soul, and the eternal condition of it: O what would he not give to be assured that all is well between God and him! To know that God and Christ is his, that he is fit to live or die; because a mistake here is very dreadful, and of an infinite consequence? But on the contrary, the foolish disobedient, that are deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in sin, and alienated from the love of God, having no hope, and without God in the world, are highly confident and strongly persuaded that it shall go well with them in the world to come. I knew a poor ignorant profane wretch, being told on his death-bed, and but a little before he entered into eternity, that death was come, replied, where is it? I will *go forth* and meet it, putting his legs

over the bed—in a little time gave up the ghost.—Therefore in this great soul-affair, let none be so fool-hardy as to trust without trial: but let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another; for every man shall bear his own burden, Gal. vi. 4, 5.

Quest. If the consideration of our latter end is of so much moment, why do men and women that have immortal souls think no more of it?

Answ. The great cause is from that horrid cursed atheism and unbelief, which is deeply rooted and riveted in men's minds and hearts. They do not credit that wondering and amazing doctrine of the other world, according to the belief of which they must live or die to all eternity.

If we should take a serious prospect of endless eternity, and of those great things men seem to believe, namely, that they must die, that in every man's body there is a never-dying soul, that there will be a different and unchangeable state of men after death, and that without holiness, real holiness of heart and life, no man shall see the Lord! And compare

the lives and practices of those that pretend to believe these things, and we may see them as busy as a company of ants in a sunny day: and that the general course of men hath no tendency towards this end, but indeed a sad and woeful incongruity.

2. The second cause is want of spiritual and divine wisdom. It was for want of that wisdom which is from above, that the Israelites did not consider: O that they were wise! said God. They are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them, Deut. xxxii. 28. If men were wise for their precious and eternal souls, they would consider what is here to be done, and what is like to be their condition in the other world. —The prudent man foreseeth the evil, or considereth the evil, and hideth himself. When God by the mouth of Moses, threatened to plague the Egyptians by the pestilence, hail and fire, he that believed and feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharoah, made his servants and cattle flee into the house, and were preserved, Exod. ix. 20. So the soul that is truly wise, to consider of the danger of being destroyed by the grievous hail

and fire of God's wrath, will flee into the hiding-place, viz. under the wings of the great and glorious Mediator, where alone there is true succour: but he that did not fear or consider of the danger, left his servants and cattle in the field, and were destroyed, Exod. ix. 21, 25.

3. The third hinderance is sensuality, worldly pleasures and cares, these carrying away the heart from true consideration. The Israelites' confluence of creature comforts, caused them to forsake and forget God, Deut. xxxii. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. The old world was eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, not considering of their danger, till the flood came and took them away, Matth. xxiv. 38, 39. The men of the earth do set mind earthly things that their hearts are surfeited and drunken with the cares of it, Luke xii. 34. And while men's minds and thoughts are carried so vehemently after the world, to make provision for their life, they can think but little of their death, Luke xii. 15, 16, 17, 18.

4. The fourth obstruction is a plague upon the heart, and desperate security proceeding from *it*—No bonds next to death are so strong to

keep men under, as security and senselessness of spirit. So dead a sleep possesseth most of the ungodly world, they that are past feeling, and become so stark dead, that the voice of God in the dreadful threatenings of his word, and the alarm of his amazing tremendous judgments, and desolating providences, prevail, not to awaken them. The Lord hath poured out upon them the spirit of a deep sleep, and hath (in judgment) closed their eyes, that they can sin in the very face of the Judge, at the very brink of hell, at the very mouth and entrance of that great gulf of eternity.

5. A fifth hinderence to men's consideration of their latter end, is a strong delusion of heart, or satanical suggestion. The old serpent, and desperately deluded hearts, make them dream that God is all love, and that they shall have a long life, that preparation for death and eternity is a short work, and that it may be done at any time, namely, when they have done with the world, when they are old, or lying on a sick-bed. They say in their hearts, it is but believing or repenting, and saying, Lord, have mercy on us, let *me die the death* of the righteous. Under

this deadly delusion they dream of hea
and go laughing to hell, 1 Thess. v. 3.

And that which doth much increase
stupidity, may be the want or neglect
powerful, and soul-searching ministry, w
office (as watchmen) is to foresee the da
and to warn and awaken secure sin
crying aloud to them in the name of
Lord, awake, thou that sleepest, arise fron
dead, and Christ shall give thee light,
v. 14.—But some cannot endure that M
ters should be so severe, plain, and pie
in their doctrine, so as to thunder and lig
in the eyes and ears of sleepy souls;
are well contented to sit under those
daub with untempered mortar, and who
pillows for their arm holes, under w
ministry they may take a nap, and sle
out. But they hate him that reprovet
the gate, that galls, cuts, and wounds
conscience; just like the galled-backed h
that bites and kicks at him that would
him.

A person of no mean quality speaking
opinion of several ministers, said such a
I can hear, and such an one I can hear

well, but the third he mentioned, that was wont to lay the axe to the root of the tree, and grapple with the heart, I cannot endure to hear him, for he always grates upon my conscience.

6. Men do not consider their latter end, because they are afraid to do it.

1. First, to wanton sinners, the remembrance of death is a bitter pill, that will not suffer the pleasure of sin to go down so sweetly, therefore they say to the thoughts of death, as the governor to Paul, go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will send for thee. Serious thoughts of death and judgment to come, as the hand-writing on the wall, will damp the spirits, and mar the mirth of the greatest prince and gallant in the world.

2. They fear to think of death, because they have made no preparation for it, viz. they have not believed, repented, lived a life of holiness, so as to make their God their friend. A bankrupt that oweth many hundred pounds more than he is worth, is afraid to cast up his accounts; so poor and impenitent sinners that are indebted to God, that owe him ten

thousand talents, are unwilling to think of death, because death will say unto them, come, give an account of your stewardship, for you must pay the utmost farthing.

3. They are afraid to think of death, by reason of the dreadful consequences of death, as it relates to both worlds. The change that death makes as to this present world is very amazing.

1. It brings unavoidably a dissolution, or separation of soul and body; these two dear companions that have lived and conversed together, and sinned together for many years, must then part, and a living man will become a dead carcase, fit for nothing but the grave, and the soul must have another habitation, Job xvii. 13, 14. and xix. 26. Well might death be called the king of terrors.

2. It is a matter of fear to leave this world that hath been so pleasing, and delightsome, and for which you have toiled and laboured so many years, in one night to lose it all; for when the departing hour cometh, you may take a view of all your comforts which you have had under the sun, and helps of heaven, viz. husbands, wives, parents, children, kins-

folks, friends, jolly companions, gold, silver, houses, lands, sweet and delicate banquets, pleasing bargains, and say, we must now part, farewell for ever, we shall never see or enjoy you more; we shall never eat, drink, or converse more, buy or sell more: all our fleshly and sensual delights are ended, our joy, our mirth is ceased, and all the blessed advantages for our salvation will now terminate. Farewell the means of grace and all the golden opportunities for our souls; farewell all those faithful ministers that we have heard; farewell all those powerful awakening sermons that have sounded in our ears; farewell all the blessed Sabbaths, farewell all the counsels, examples, reproofs, prayers of our serious and religious friends and relations, we shall never see the face of a minister more, or hear a sermon more, never have the door of grace and life opened to us any more for ever. And what remains but a doleful remembrance of those good things that are past and gone, and a severe strict account that is yet behind.

O dreadful change and loss indeed! to them that make the world their home, that have their heaven on this side heaven, and no

provision or portion beyond the grave. The thoughts of which made a wicked young man (very thriving in the world) to utter these words, If I live I shall be a rich man, but the plague of it is I must die; which accordingly came to pass not long after.

3. No wonder death is so terrible, for after death the judgment. Death is a pursuivant that summons guilty souls to come and give an account at God's dreadful bar. And what more terrible to the malefactor than the sight and presence of an angry judge? While Paul reasoned of judgment, Felix trembled, and bid him begone; that doctrine did so gall him that he could not endure it, Acts xxiv. 25.

Use 2. The second use is to exhort, persuade, and stir you up to put this duty of so great and infinite importance into practice. O Sirs! I beseech you to entertain some timely thoughts of your dying hour, that death and you may be more familiar. The best friend you have in heaven and earth longs to see it done. O that there were such an heart in them!

Now if you would do any thing in this blessed work, viz. to prepare for death and

judgment, it must be done, 1. Suddenly. 2. Seriously. 3. Effectually.

1. It must be done suddenly: it is a business of that importance that must not be neglected or delayed for a moment's time Did you but see that you are upon the confines of eternity, and in danger every day of being undone for ever, you would quickly come to the resolution. To further and engage you, consider.

1. Life (as dear and precious as it is) is very uncertain; what a nothing is this life?—a wind, a vapour, a dream, a thread, a breath, a bubble.

How soon may the thread be cut, the glass run, or this bright burning lamp be dim or out? when, how, or where this short dying life may terminate thou dost not know, whether at home or abroad, among thy friends or strangers, in the field or house, at thy table or in thy bed, who can tell?

2. Death may come suddenly. When the the pale horse will set forth, whether in the morning, or at mid-day, or at midnight, no man can tell. There is a fatal hour which none can pass, Luke xii. 20. Psal. lxxiii. 18, 19. Psal. lxiv. 7. 1 Thess. v. 2.

3 When death comes, it strikes sure: this king of Terrors on the pale horse always rides the circuit, and doth execution wherever he cometh; no shield or buckler, or armour of proof can defend us; no, not an army or guard of men or angels. If dreadful death finds a king on his throne, or a beggar on the dunghill, it is all a case. The strength of man, though a Sampson, this great leviathan death counts but a straw; death doth his work speedily, easily; witness the last plague. I shall add here.

1. Death's calls, warnings, and alarms are very frequent, not one of you but have had many a call and knock to mind you of death.

2. Death's commands are peremptory; he brings his writ along with him. Death comes in the name of the terrible Judge, and takes his commission out of the court of heaven, in order to the accomplishment and execution of an eternal and irrevocable decree, so that he must do his work—will have his errand. Although a man had mines of gold and silver to give, it cannot deliver from the arrest of this inxorable sergeant.

3. Death's conquest is great—I know thou

wilt bring me to death, and the place appointed for all living. What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Thou hast set his bounds that he cannot pass. They that have conquered kingdoms and countries, and carried all before them, have been subjected by death. When death comes and takes a man by the throat, though the proudest, stoutest, strongest in the world, he must go; willing or unwilling, it is all one to death. It is observable, that of bad men their souls are not resigned, but taken away. What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Job xxvii. 8, 20. A tempest stealeth him away in the night; this night shall thy soul be required: death will not stay one night. It is in vain for them that are strong and lively to say to death, go to the wrinkled faces, to the grey heads, to the pale cheeks, to the naked backs, to the dry bones, to the dry breasts, meddle not with this young man, strike not this comely beautiful young woman, that is in the flower and prime of nature; go to yonder consumptive, declining, decaying old man; go to that weak, withered old woman; let me alone to be

excused. O but death regards it not! For this great conqueror death knocks as often at the young man's door as at the door of the old woman; death arrests and carrieth away the strong, the healthy, the rich, the honourrable, the learned, prisoners of the grave, as often as the weak, the sickly, the poor, the base, the ignorant.

2. You are to do it seriously with thy soul; the living will lay it to heart, Eccles. vii. 2. The dead cannot. There is no device in the grave: then go about it now in good earnest, before old age and death cometh.

3. Do it effectually, go through with the work, leave it not undone, or but done by halves: let every lust be mortified, every duty performed, every grace exercised. As good never a whit, as never the nearer. Now you have an opportunity before you, the day of grace is continued, Christ is at the door, open to him, and make all sure: for if ever thou be justified, pardoned, sanctified, it must be now. The considerations to persuade you are these following:—

Motive 1. Consider there is an absolute and indispensible necessity for the doing of it, a

present necessity, an infinite and eternal necessity; other things may be done, this must be done, and it is more than time this great work were done and finished. It is the grand business of your life, timely and truly to prepare for death and judgment. It were better that all your concerns in the world were wholly neglected, namely, husband, wife, children, buying, selling, seed-time, harvest, omitted and let all run to ruin than to hazard, lose, and undo your souls: for this will certainly ruin body and soul for ever.

O seriously mind how little you have done in the time of your life past, and how incapable you will be to do any thing at the end of time, when you come to take up your lodging in the grave: O remember the days of darkness, they will be many, Eccles. xi. 8. They that have been in the grave a thousand years have done nothing, neither can you when you come there. Now, for you that have lived some twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty years, and done nothing in order to a preparation for your everlasting state, it is high time to begin the work.

The most of you are so senseless as not to

consider or entertain a thought of death till you hear the bell, or see a grave, or coffin, or till death comes within your wall, and knock at your bed-head: when you see a friend, a child, a brother, a husband, or wife, gasping or dying, till you see them bedewed with cold sweets, and groaning with dying pangs, till your eyes thus affect your hearts, your hearts are seldom affected with the sense of your mortality. Now, since it must be done, and done suddenly, resolve, in spite of men and devils and all the world, to set about the work.

Motive 2. Consider, it may be done, you are in a capacity to do it: adored for ever be free grace!

1. Time and opportunity is yet before you. The torch burns, the sun shines, yet it is day though not morning; some sands are behind though not a whole glass. Some of you are old, lame, deaf, but not dead; others weak, sick, languishing, but alive. If the sun were set, the candle out, the glass run, farewell all hope of heaven, or for altering your condition for ever. They that are gone down to the dead, and amongst the damned, may and do

reflect with torment upon the opportunities once offered to make them happy, but can call back none: that is impossible.

2. God is willing to help if you go to him; thine is the power, and he gives it to them that have no strength, Isa. xl. 29. Duty is ours, assistance and success are God's. That God who hath given thee a considering season can also give a considering soul; go to him upon thy knees, and beg as for thy life his speedy aid; and say as the woman to David, help, O king; or as the father for his distressed son, Mark ix. 22, If thou canst do any thing, help us. Christ did help us; it is his promise, seek and ye shall find. But it cannot be said so of separated souls, because time and means for them are gone for ever.

Then, in the name of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, wise men that are endowed with precious, rational, considering souls, that difference you from brutes. Let that noble faculty of reason be executed in considering your latter end; for consideration is a serious, eager, or lively act or exercise of the understanding about the things to be done, or not to be done, furthering or impeding the ex-

ecution of them as it seems good. It is the exercise of the mind and heart; these are at work in this divine consideration. Contemplation (as one observes) looks upon things as the eye upon the object. *Judicium* discerneth things, whether good or bad; but meditation or consideration is a further inquisition into the truth. Set consideration at work, and not like brutes suffer your eyes, ears, lusts, and senses to be your guides, but commune with your hearts, consider your ways, reflect upon your actions, look to your end; which if you did, you would not be so sensual, so sinful as you have been, and are, Isa. i. 4.

Motive 3. Consider the omitting or neglect of it will render you the worst of fools. If the doing of it be your highest wisdom, the not doing of it must needs be the greatest folly; this will make you like Ephraim, a silly dove without a heart. Do you know that you must die, and die but once? And will you not endeavour to do that well which cannot be done a second time? As Luther said to his adversaries, "Ye can kill me but once: ye are not able to raise me to life again, and kill me a second time." So I say to

thee, O thou secure sinner! when thy breath is gone, it will return no more.

O consider with a trembling heart how much depends upon this dying once! namely, the gaining or losing of thy dear precious soul, the gaining or losing of the favour of God, the fruition of God; the joys of heaven, or the torments of hell hang upon it.

When death comes, your eternity is cast, the very next moment after you have shut the dark and amazing gulf, you shall see and know what you shall be and where you shall be to all eternity. And will you judge the men of the earth, or worldly wise men, the wisest of men, who take care for the body and neglect the soul—that make provision for time, but none for eternity. O Sirs! if you would but trace them to a sick-bed, a death-bed, from thence into eternity, and to God's dreadful tribunal, you might easily determine, Jer. xvii. 11. Luke xii. 20, 21, and xvi. 22, 23. Rev. vi. 15.

Motive 4. In a very little time your present powerful and awakening helps and advantages to excite and put you in mind of the other world will be past and gone. And

these are chiefly three, viz. 1. Awakening Ordinances; 2. Awakening Providences; 3. Awakening Convictions.

1. Awakening ordinances will have an end. The faithful, powerful ministers of the gospel, that watch for your souls, and whose office is to fire the beacons, and give the alarm, will, we know not how soon, finish their work. Those Boanergeses and ambassdors of the Lord, that preach the amazing and dreadful doctrine of death and judgment, and that with loud and earnest cries, tears, and fervour of spirit, to make you sensible of your sin and danger, will shortly be called home. Moses that great prophet, after he had composed this excellent Song (of which my text is a part) was gathered to his fathers. Noah, that preacher of righteousness, after he had for many years together warned the old world, was called into the ark, and they had never a sermon more till the wrath of God came upon them, and there was no remedy, 2 Pet. ii. 5. Be ye not therefore as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying turn ye from your evil ways, for they have not long to cry. The prophets do not live for ever,

Zech. i. 4, 5. You cannot rationally expect always to hear the pleasant noise of Aaron's bells, or the sound of silver trumpets; the sun will go down over the prophets! therefore while the watchmen are upon the walls, take warning, and finish your work while you have the light. O sinners! improve for your eternal advantage, those plain and powerful sermons which you hear and read: and let it not be accounted legal preaching. Who were more severe in their preaching than our Lord and his forerunners, whom we ought to imitate? Otherwise we draw the horrible sin of blood guiltiness upon our souls, Ezek. iii. 18, 19. It is observed, that there are more dreadful doctrines scattered up and down in the New Testament, than in the Old, the powerful application of which is very necessary, both for secure sinners and drowsy saints. Holy David, after his fall, fell into a deep sleep, and did not awake until Nathan came and told him plainly and particularly of his sin. And of the virgins we read, while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept, Mat. xxv. O how many sleepy souls are there in the world, and in many cities, towns, and

parishes in this nation; that will, either living, dying, or after death, sadly bewail the not improving the labours of their faithful pastors.

2. All your awakening providences by which God warns and calls, will have an end. The great and glorious God for a long time together, hath been speaking and calling to us by his word, and of late years he hath spoken by his dreadful rod, and that very terribly. The sword, the plague, the fire, the decay of trade, and other judgments, are the loud voice of an angry God. Those afflictions on our families, relations, estates, persons, are in order to the awakening us out of sleep, and so for our profit.—When Manasseh was among the thorns, and bound with fetters, and carried into Babylon, he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, 12, 13. After Ephraim was chastised, he awakened, turned and repented; for bonds and cords of affliction do open the ear to instruction. When he showeth them their work and their transgression, and commandeth that they turn from iniquity, Job xxxvi. 8, 9, 10. Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. Now to have a deaf ear to the rod and word, to be

hardened and secure, and go in sin under awakening and amazing providences, is a dreadful judgment, and that which ripens men for ruin, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. This is that King Ahaz, who, in the time of his distress, did trespass yet more against the Lord, Jer. v. 3.

3. Your awakening convictions will have an end too. Those secret and powerful workings, strivings and strugglings of the Spirit of God under the rod, and in the world, will be suspended: Christ will not always be at the door, calling, knocking; and his spirit that is so much grieved and opposed, will not always strive and struggle with your hearts and consciences, Gen. iv. 3. Now, sinners, if you have any love or regard to your immortal souls, before all these helps be taken away, be wise to consider and prepare for your end, lest God should resolve speedily, and say to you as to the Jews, Isa. i. 5. Why should you be stricken any more? or as Hosea iv. 17. Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone. They will have their lusts, and they shall have them. As I live, saith the Lord, this iniquity shall not be purged till you die. Sith nothing will prevail, I am resolved, saith God, they shall

never hear any awakening, soul-searching sermons more, never have a correction or conviction more till they go down to hell.

Motive. 5. Consider that the earnest cries, tears, of unbelievers when they come to die, will be in vain, fruitless, and unsuccessful. Though you speak in the anguish of your souls, and complain in the bitterness of your spirits, when your flesh upon you shall have pain, and your souls within you shall mourn, it shall be to no purpose.

You that will not seek God betimes, and make supplication to the Almighty, that will not pray, while you have time to pray, helps to pray, health to pray, encouragement to pray.

Now God invites—you may have audience; your prayers in a dying hour will be but the expressions of your fears and terrors, arising from the sense and nearness of your danger, when there will be but a step between your departing souls and the state of devils. God seldom hears from some men, unless trouble, sickness, fear, distress, and anguish cometh upon them. Then pain will make them pray, and howl upon their beds; and it is but howling, not praying, Hosea vii. 14. But will

God hear his cry, when trouble cometh upon him? saith Job, Chap. xxvii. 9. No, saith the Lord, I will not be enquired of by you Ezek. xx. 3. Because it cometh from an evil mind, or stinking breath, proceeding from a corrupt, rotten, cursed heart, and then it must needs be abominable, Prov. xxi. 17. and xv. 8. I will, saith David, wash mine hands in innocency, and then compass thine altar; for if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer, Psal. lxvi. 18.—If God would not hear a David's prayer, a man after God's own heart, he will not hear a devil's prayer, nor the prayer of a swearer, Sabbath-breaker, drunkard; he heareth not sinners that like and love their lusts. No, saith the Holy Ghost, though they seek me early, they shall not find me. Here note, that there is a twofold early—namely, God's early, and man's early. God's early is in the morning of our life, in the time of youth: then God calls, and invites to come, Prov. viii. 17. Eccles. xii. 1. Man's early is in the evening, or at the end of life, or when a man is nigh into death, when pain, sorrow, and anguish cometh upon him. In their

affliction they will seek me early, Hosea v. 15. When fear cometh as desolation, and destruction cometh as a whirlwind, then shall they shall call upon me, but I will not answer —they shall seek me early, but shall not find me, Prov. i. 27, 28. God will say to all such sinners, remember it, as Isaac to Abimelech, Gen. xxvi. 27.—Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hated me, and sent me away from you? or he will say, as once to the children of Israel, that cried to him in their sore distress, go cry to the gods that ye have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation: as for me, I will not deliver you, Judges x. 14. You have served the devil, embraced the world, satisfied your lusts, joined with mine enemies: go to the devil, go to your lusts, to your wicked company, let them deliver you in your distress: now death and devils are come for you, I will not own you, nor your prayers; your souls abhorred me, and my soul abhors you and your prayers; depart form me, I know you not.

Motive 6. It is the great comfort of the godly man's life to hope and know that he is fit for death. Whatever be their lot and

portion in this world, be assured it shall go well with them in the other world. Art thou in a state of grace, at odds with sin, and truly in love with Christ and holiness? Be of good cheer, go thy way and eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for the bitterness of death is past: the king of terrors that had the power of death is conquered by the Lord of life. Terrible death, that rides on the pale horse, is dismounted by the dear Lord that rides on the white horse, under whose bloody cross thou may see him disarmed, wounded, and dead. Death, that reigned from Adam to Moses, is now swallowed up in victory, Hosea xiii. 14. I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death! I will be thy plague, O grave! I will be thy destruction. The believing soul is dead with Christ while he lives, Rom. vi. 8. And is delivered not only from the damnation, but the dominion of sin, and there is hope in his death. When he dieth he shall die in the Lord, Rev. xiv. 13. He shall sleep in Jesus, 1 Thess. iv. 14. His end shall be peace, Psal. xxxvii. 37. This made the apostle, after his sad conflict, Romons vii. to triumph

over this last enemy death. 1 Cor. xv. 35.

Motive 7. If you should not prepare for death, yet you will wish you had, as many do when it is too late. You that are for making for the flesh, and so eagerly pursuing the world, and the things of it, when you shall be cast upon a bed of languishing, you will wish, in the very torment of your minds, and flames of horror, O that I had parted with my sins! O that I had been careful to please and honour God, and to get an interest in Jesus Christ! then should I now have died the death of the righteous; but this I wholly slighted. I prosecuted the world with might and main, and got so many thousands for my posterity, and I lived a merry and jovial life; but for my soul, for my eternity, things of infinite worth, I have done nothing—I forgot my soul. Now here is the messenger of death come for me, to imprison my body in the grave, the chambers of darkness, and to carry my soul I know not whither—I fear to hell. O that I had been wise to understand this! to consider my latter end. What would I now give to live a few years more, to make provision for my soul, that must now enter the gulph of endless eternity.

Motive 8. Consider the gain will be exceeding great, as will appear by these following particulars:

1. Would you hate sin as hell, and be more truly holy, consider your latter end. This is most certain, that all the antecedents and dreadful consequences of death spring and grow out of this bitter root. What is it that wounds, stings, pains, and kills? what is it that brings diseases, and threatens death, that murders the body, and that damns and burns the soul? what is it that doth necessitate thee to make use of physic and physicians whilst alive? and bringeth thee to a coffin or grave when thou art dead? Is it not sin which thou embracest in thy bosom?

You poor, blind, deluded souls, as little and as lovely as sin looks in your wanton eyes, it is the mother and nurse of all your miseries, hatched in hell, the devil's spawn or excrement; he that committeth sin is of the devil, 1 John iii. 8. This is that evil thing and bitter, that hails death and hell at the heels of it, yea that arms death, devils, and hell against us. Were it not for this black, ugly, fierce, cruel, and bloody adversary, law nor justice could not condemn us, death could not kill us, devils

could not torment us, hell could not burn us.

Sin as the traitor and murderer of your immortal souls, and those nails that will shortly dig your graves; and will you hug and hold it fast? Will a woman put a knife in her bosom that hath killed or murdered her dear child or husband? no, by no means, it must be broken and cast away for ever. Now, Sirs, if sin be the enemy, use it as an enemy or murderer, kill it, take the sacrificing-knife, and cut the throat of it, or strike the heart-vein, and let it bleed till it dies; deal by it as Samuel by Agag—cut it in pieces. Did you think seriously of death and hell, you would hate it to purpose, and say, away to hell with it, from whence it came; and it would put you upon a desire and earnest endeavour after holiness. Being exposed to a dissolution, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? 2 Pet. iii. 11. But if you forget death, you will make dreadful work, namely your accompts greater, and hell the hotter; you will increase your sin, and God will heap up wrath against the day of wrath. And if ever God shew mercy, it will cost you dear, your souls must mourn, your hearts must break and bleed for

sin; for unless you repent you will certainly be damned, Luke xiii. 5.

2. Would you speedly call off your hearts from the world, and lay up a treasure in heaven, remember your latter end. In the greatest affluence of worldly prosperity, always consider that you must die.

Poor worldlings! that make gold your hope, whose plottings and ploddings are for earth. If death and eternity were more in your thoughts, you would let go that in your affections which you cannot hold in your possession, and love that but a little that will be lost, and which you cannot love long: riches have wings, and they will be gone. Consider how little the things of this world will stand you in stead in the evil day; your gold and silver cannot keep you from diseases while you live, nor from hell when you are dead, Prov. xi. 4. Psal. xlix. 6, 7.

It falleth out with many of the great storers of the world, as it doth with a sumptêr horse, who all the day carrieth a great treasure on his back, but at night is taken from him, and he thrust into a foul stable: so many wealthy wordlings, that tire themselves to get and carry worldly treasure, when death cometh, is

taken from them, and they, for their ill getting or ill using of it, are thurst down to hell. The rich man died, and in hell lifted up his eyes.

And if you would deaden your hearts to this empty earth, and look after a treasure above, a happiness beyond the grave, that shall last as long as your souls shall last, think of death: this would divert your worldly cares and projects.

Remember from this day to your last day cannot be long: your journey or voyage is short, and a little provision is enough: neither poverty nor riches, but food convenient, is the desire and choice of a citizen of Zion. Converse more with death, and be often looking into eternity, and thou mayest hear, as it were, a voice speaking to thee, as God to Baruch, Jer. xlv. 4, 5, I will break down and pluck up, and seekest thou great things? Seek them not. Death is the great leveller that will make all equal: and you that grasp the world most greedily will find it but vanity; for all is vanity is the language of experience, Eccles. i. 2, 1 John ii. 17.

When Samuel was to anoint Saul, he brought or directed him to Rachel's sepulchre, and to this end, (as is supposed) namely,

to suppress or prevent naughty, proud thoughts that might arise from new and great preferment. And if the supposition be true, it is as if he had spoken thus, Saul, God hath highly honoured you, and I anoint you king; but remember, here lies the dust of the beautiful Rachel: and though you are now king in Israel, yet you must be as Rachel, viz., laid in the grave, or sepulchre: the thoughts of which is a very mortifying meditation.—You that have the waters of a full cup, that wallow in wealth, and swim in worldly glory, to wean you from the world (that your hearts may not be turned into earth, and buried before you are buried,) keep fresh in your thoughts death and eternity, Job xiv. 14.

3. Would you be deeply sensible of the sad and doleful condition of unbelievers, when they come to die? Think seriously on your latter end. What will you do in the hour of distress, when God shall call for your breath, change your countenance, and require your souls, if you have made no preparation for death and judgment?

Poor souls! I would pity you with my very heart, to think how ignorant you are of your great concernments: you eat, drink,

sleep, buy, sell, and get gain, but slight your souls, and do not consider of the evil day.

Wo be to him that is alone in life, and alone in death; that hath no Christ to befriend him, or stand by him in that woful day: that cometh to lie down on his death-bed without peace or pardon, who shall go into the grave, and stand before the bar, without an advocate to plead for him.

It is most probable you may have different apprehensions of yourselves and others in your dying hour: for the nearer the object, the clearer the sight. O sinners! when the door of eternity begins to open, as usually it doth to men dying, you will have other thoughts of yourselves and other men.—Here you ruffle it out, thinking yourselves above and better than others: behold great Babel! said that proud person in his princely palace; but when pale death appears, it will pull down those peacock feathers, and cause their crests to fall. Now the world shines and sparkles in your eyes, which make you judge and think, that nothing but riches, honour, and greatness, can make you happy: then it will appear, the paint being off, to be an empty nothing. As for the pure in heart,

who morn for sin, and mind their souls above the world, are scorned, jeered, hated, being looked upon as a company of poor pensive, sneaking, besotted fools, will then be adjudged the best, wisest, and happiest men on the earth. Now sin is excused, and called a light and little thing, or trick of youth: but then it will have a black and dreadful face, and feel more heavy than lead—taste more bitter than death itself.

Now the damned and cursed crew are your brave boon companions and bosom friends: but when you are come to your dying groans and cold sweats, away with them—their sight is terrible! But know that you who have been companions in sin must be companions in sufferings, and lie down together in everlasting chains and flames; you shall be fettered and bound together, and never part any more for ever.

Now an interest in Christ, and a life of holiness, is little, little valued, and every base lust and trifle preferred; then a world, a world for Christ. Forty thousand pounds for a good conscience! cried out a wicked wealthy wordling, when dying and passing into eternity.

4. Would you expedite your repentance? try your state, and make all ready for the other world? think upon this last enemy the king of terrors, that will ere long terminate your days, and then all your opportunities will be gone for ever.

If the thoughts of death, especially the second death, did but influence your hearts, and penetrate into your consciences, you would easily be persuaded to cast away your sins, namely, to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, and to rend your hearts, and to sit alone, and to mourn in secret; to afflict your souls, and to put your mouths in the dust if so be there may be hope, Lam. iii. 29. We see that men in a journey, if they think they have day enough, are slack and slow enough, but if they see but a little time, they will make speed. If a man must do the work of a whole day in half a day, he will make speed, repentance is not a work for a day, though a daily work: our whole life is little enough to complete and perfect it. As long as we sin we must mourn: while we provoke the judge we must plead guilty, and sue out our pardon with ropes about our necks, and smiting on our breasts, and, if it might be, with tears of

blood. And the great things of death and judgment will prepare and prompt you to do it suddenly; for when the day is gone, the night come, and the grave and hell have shut their mouths upon you, what can be done? Eccles. ix. 10.

5. Would you pray more fervently, more frequently than ever you have done? Remember you must die.

The monuments and statues of the dead (as one notes) are made in a praying posture, viz. kneeling, and with hands lifted up to heaven, as if the rememberance of them now dead should teach us our duty what we must do whilst living. One that was wont to pray often in a day, being asked why he spent so much time in prayer, gave no other answer but this, I must die, I must die. An awakening apprehension of a man's entrance upon an endless state, and a speedy approach before the holy God, will make him pray, and that importunately. If there be in the family a husband, wife, or child near unto death, almost every one that cometh about the bed will be lifting up hands, and putting up prayers; and then you cry out, send presently for some sober serious minister, or some

solid savoury praying Christian, to commend his sad case to God. The young man who lately suffered for murder, who came into Newgate as ignorant of God as the horse or the mule, and as senseless of his soul as a stock or stone, was, by the access and application of ministers to him, convinced of his desperate case, and, through the grace and blessing of God upon his appointed means, he seemed so deeply sensible of the dreadful hazard of his precious soul, that he did with so much brokenness of heart confess his sins, pray and plead with God and Christ for pardon, even to the wonder and amazement of those ministers and christians who were present. And being asked how often he prayed, answered five or six times in a day; and it was with such meltings and multitudes of tears, that it did move the very bowels of the auditors, and, as they said, turned them into tears. Thus you see how a powerful conviction of death and judgment may prevail upon the heart to make them cry that never prayed before. As for you that can lie down at night, rise up in the morning, and go about the world without secret or family prayer, I must tell you that you have but a slight, if any thought of death

and eternity, and no sense of or regard to your everlasting condition, which is a sad symptom of a Christless state.

6. Would you do good to others, to their bodies, and to their souls? Consider you must die, and after death you will be incapacitated of doing anything. The wise man speaking of the season of doing, and of the vicissitudes of man's life, namely, that there is a time to be born, and a time to die; and he having observed the issues and changes of providence that hath made every thing beautiful in its season, concludes that it is best for a man to do good in his life, Eccles. iii. 12. As we have therefore opportunity (saith the apostle) let us do good to all men, Gal. vi. 10 when it is in the power of thine hand to do it, Prov. iii. 27. Sirs, the real thoughts of death will prompt you to give a portion to six, and also to seven, and that in season; for when death comes all is gone: then it is no more in the power of thine hand to do it.

Did you now believe and consider that you must die, and give an account to God, the great landlord and donor of all your good things, (great receipts have great accounts) you would not contract your hearts, and shut

up your bowels against those many miserable objects who are so often in your view.

Now, that you may be like sheep, and not like swine, be good in your life, and let your acts of mercy be distributed in the morning, the fittest season to sow this seed. Therefore, speedily draw out thy soul to the hungry, before death separate thy soul and body; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased, Heb. xiii. 16.

7. Would you get and keep sincerity (as a precious pearl indeed), think often of death and judgment. Then it will be tried, then it will stand you instead. Sincerity (the scripture perfection) is the best of a Christian, the grace of every grace; for faith unfeigned, and love in sincerity, are the very nerves and sinews of Christianity.

The next best to the precious blood and righteousness of our Redeemer, (to plead for us at the hour of death, and in the court of heaven) is truth in the inward parts, Isa. xxxviii. 3. To be a mourner in Sion is a matter of solace and real comfort, but to be a sinner in Sion is sad, and will be a matter of torment. A Judas among the apostles, a devil in a Samuel's mantle, is a devil indeed. The sinners in Sion are afraid, and cause

enough, for to live and die in hypocrisy is most dreadful, because hypocrisy will certainly bring you down to hell, yea, the hottest place of that devouring fire shall be the hypocrite's portion, Isa. xxxiii. 14, Mat. xxiv. 51.

8. Lastly, would you redeem your time, and be greedy of getting grace in the day of grace, for the present, spiritual, and eternal salvation of souls? Think seriously of your end.

You sleepy, secure souls! did you consider that the night of death will come certainly, and may come suddenly, you would work while it is day, and not be so mad as to put off believing, repenting, and soul-afflicting work, self-trying and approving work, until the day of old age, a sick-bed, or dying pangs seize upon you. Consider a death-bed repentance is seldom had, and seldom good, or sick-bed repentance is seldom found, but often a sick repentance. Now, if you would imitate your Lord, to work while it is day, remember you must die, John ix. 4.

Directions and helps to consider of your latter end.

Direction 1. Search diligently to find out what it is that keeps you and the serious

thoughts of death and eternity at so great a distance, and cry mightily to God speedily to remove it: if it be either ignorance, atheism, unbelief, sensuality, earthly-mindedness, or security, be deeply sensible of it, and set prayers to work, pour out thy very soul to God with the greatest fervour and importunity. Say, as Moses, Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, Psal. xc. 11, 12. Sirs, it is spiritual wisdom will cause you to consider: then cry after knowledge, and lift up thy voice for understanding, Prov. ii. 3, 4. For she is thy life, Prov. iv. 13. It is as much as thy life and soul is worth. Then enter into thy closet, and fall on thy knees, and pray to God in the name of Christ for spiritual wisdom. We must seek it, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. And God will give it, James i. 5. Beg more than for thy life, for a truly wise and awakened heart, without which the great concerns of God and thine immortal soul be for ever neglected.

Direct. 2. Diligently and faithfully use and improve the most awakening means which have a tendency hereunto.

1. Set yourselves under a powerful, faithful, and soul-searching ministry who make the conversion of souls their main business.

A lazy secure minister is not like to awaken a secure sinner; the convicton and conversion of souls is not the mark they shoot at. Resolve to hear, love, countenance, and encourage those that grapple most with the conscience, and earnestly endeavour to drive and draw souls to Christ, by setting the blessing and the curse, life and death before them. Conviction leads the way to conversion, as the needle doth the thread. What is a plaister worth when there is no wound? It is the broken bones cry out for help, the whole need not the physician. General overly preaching is like the sword in the scabbard, that doth not cut nor wound, or like physic in the bottle, that doth not penetrate or work; but plain, particular, convincing preaching (such as Nathan's to David, or Peter's to the Jews, 2 Sam. xii. 7. Acts ii. 36.) is like the sword in the bowels, or physic in the body, that will pain to purpose. Those preachers that have no faculty of reproving and convincing secure sinners, are like a company of drone bees that have lost their sting, being good for nothing.

But they that have the charge of so many golden fleeces should sever the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, the precious from the vile: and, in so doing, we shall be as God's mouth, and free from the blood of all men.

O then, let this dreadful and amazing doctrine of death and judgment, be more frequently and effectually preached, that souls in peril, near ruin, may see their danger, and flee to Christ as the only refuge. Knowing the terrors of God, we persuade men, 2 Cor. v. 11; Matth. iii. 7.

2. Converse with the best Christians, viz. them that are grave, sober, solid, savoury, and sound in the faith; such as make religion their great business, who love to speak of God, and of the world to come, by whose counsel and example you may be stirred up and persuaded to repentance and holiness, to consider of death and judgment: these were David's excellent ones, in whom he did delight, and his companions, Psal. xvi. and cxix. 63.

3. Read the best books, and those that treat of death and judgment, but especially the word of God. There are the pure crystal streams, and richest mines: in this field you will find the pearl; let the word of God dwell

in you richly, be not ignorant of any part of it, but be sure to acquaint thyself with those scriptures that speak of the shortness of life, the certainty of death and judgment, heaven and hell. Read the book of Job, and the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, Psal. xxxix. Psal. xc. And let me desire you to be often urging upon your hearts, some of those scriptures that set forth the dreadfulness of that place of torment, that will be the portion of all that forget God, and make no provision for their precious souls; some few I have here set down, when I desire you would all conconsider and apply. Upon the wicked he shall rain fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup, Psal. xi. 6. Wo be unto the wicked, it shall go ill with them, Isa. iii. 11. He shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, Matt. xiii. 42; Isa. xxxiii. 14. and lxvi. 15; Matt. xxv. 41; Luke xvi. 25, 26; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9; Rev. vi. 8. 14, 15.

Direct. 3. Make conscience of setting apart a little time every day, on purpose to think on your latter end. Do it frequently, until death and you become familiar; ever and

anon put thyself into a posture of dying. Converse with thy winding-sheet, coffin, grave; let thy great change be so upon thy heart, that thou mayest every morning or evening walk a turn or two with death; remember, however it may be with thee now, thou must ere long be grasping and groaning forth for breath upon thy dying-bed, and grapple with the king of terrors, and in a moment go down to the grave, and shall come up no more, Job x. 21

If thou wouldst affect thy heart with thoughts of thy latter end, go down to Golgotha, and think upon these dry bones, and putrified bodies, and there revive the memory of your departed relations, husbands, wives, children, friends, neighbours; and look beyond the chambers of the grave. Converse with those miserable departed souls, give the prisoners of the pit a visit, meditate on the raging furious flames, that dismal darkness, smoke, and stink of the bottomless pit, the shrieking of the damned and roaring of the devils, the heart-piercing complaints for water to cool their scorching tongues. And when thou dost think upon those millions of souls that are hanging up in hell, reflect upon thyself, and

expect thy turn speedily. Suppose every day thy last, every meal thy last, every journey thy last, every duty, sacrament, sermon, thy last. And when the Lord's day cometh, think with thyself, this will be the last spiritual market, that I shall have to buy the spiritual oil of grace, and to provide for the bridegroom's coming; after this day is ended, I may never more hear the Lord Jesus speak to me by the mouths of his faithful ministers never be invited to come to Christ, or to believe, repent, part with sin, and except of a pardon more; and so demean thyself every day, and in every duty, as if thou shouldst be called to God's bar, and give up thine account at night. In all thy thoughts, words, and actions, say to thyself, I do thus and thus, viz. would I eat, drink, sleep, converse, buy, sell, preach, hear, pray, for worse, if certainly I knew this day would be my last? O let that morto, *Memento Mori*, which some carry in their rings, be engraven on your hearts, being the great concernment of your lives. This is that which God's people, and some of the heathen too, have been careful to remember. King Asa made his sepulchre in his life time, 2 Chron. xvi.

14. And some in their gardens and places of solace and delight, as Joseph of Arimathea, John xix. 41. And some of the heathen were wont to walk among the graves, to put them in mind of death; some have had their graves always before their gates, others dead men's skulls presented every day at their table; and shall we, that believe the doctrine of the other world, put off the serious thoughts of death? Solomon adviseth us to go to the house of mourning, telling us it is better, because the living will lay it to heart. When you hear the tidings of the death of your friends, relations, or neighbours, go thither, though not personally, yet contemplatively; in your minds and thoughts, go and put yourselves in their stead, and think thus: A living man or woman is become a dead corpse, or cold clay, the soul is gone to its everlasting habitation; but to what place, whether to be comforted, or tormented, who can tell? If he were a godly man, he is certainly gone to heaven: if thou art such an one, thy soul will shortly be with him: but if an ungodly man, he is certainly gone to hell, and now among devils: and if thou art such an one, thou shalt ere long be there too. It is true, the

dead can have no thoughts of the living; but the living (saith Solomon) know that they must die. And you that are young, when you hear of the death of a lively, lusty young man, or lovely beautiful young woman, stop, reflect and consider, may not this be thy case, O man, woman, or child, in a very little space? I shall say no more by way of direction, only desire you to review the particulars before-mentioned; and you that are parents and masters of families, who make conscience of looking to the souls of those committed to your charge, may cause your children and servants to learn by heart the particulars I here set down, 1. That it is most certain an end will be. 2. At our latter end all things in this world will be gone for ever. 3. All the pleasures of sin will be gone, and leave nothing but a sting. 4. That only which is eternal will stand us in stead. 5. Consider which of the two eternities you are going towards. 6. We are all near our everlasting habitations. 7. You know not how suddenly or unexpectedly your end may be. 8. When death comes, your souls are stated, your eternity is cast. 9. It is a dreadful and amazing sight, to see a Christless soul breathing out his last.

Use 4. May be of comfort to the poor people of God who, through the fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage. Let not your hearts be troubled—fear not, neither be terrified, because of this king of fears, but cheer up your spirits, and comfort your hearts with this, that death, as terrible as it is to the wicked, cannot hurt you. The day of your death will be better than the day of your birth: and therefore death is put into the believer's inventory, and reckoned among his privileges, 1 Cor. iii. 22. Death will be gain to the godly man, viz., an outlet to all his present misery, and an inlet to endless glory. Then the truly penitent, perplexed, wearied soul, shall be perfectly free from the power of Satan, the firey darts and dreadful temptations of that unclean spirit. Then the old serpent for ever will be under their feet. Then the body of death shall be put off, and the indwelling of sin, that natural fountain of corruption will be perfectly dried up: you shall never complain of vain thoughts, or hard hearts any more: never doubt of the truth of grace, or favour of God more: the believer shall then be with Jesus Christ; the day of his dissolution will be the day of his coronation;

he shall then receive the crown; sit down on the throne, and enter into his master's joy, which is fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore.

Object. I sometimes think of death, but the thoughts of death and judgment are very terrible; I fear I am not fit to die. How shall it be known.

Answ. There is an habitual fitness for death, and an actual fitness for death. Every graciously upright man or woman in the world, that fears God in truth, is habitually fit to die? so prepared for his great change, that the sting of death, or second death, shall not hurt him; having passed the straight gate, shut the gulph, he is out of danger. As soon as a man is in a state of grace, born again, made a new creature, and by faith united to the Lord Jesus Christ, God is reconciled, his person justified, his sins pardoned, and recorded in the court of heaven, though his pardon is not brought down, transcribed and sealed in the court of his own conscience. The truly converted soul is God's special favourite, and shall lodge in his bosom, and never more be out of his favour. It is true heaven may be out of sight, God may frown, but will never condemn:

there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, 1 John ii. 1. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, it is Christ that died, Rom. viii. 33, 34.

Quest. When is the godly man actually prepared for death?

Answ. When his spiritual estate is well settled, viz., all made sure between God and his soul, particularly,

1. When a man is truly conscious to himself, that he hath sincerely, and in much brokenness of heart, repented of all his known sins, committed before, or after conversion; so that there is no fresh or former guilt remaining on him. This godly sorrow is the godly man's pleasure: he delights to be sowing in tears, loves with his soul a wet seed-time; for they that sow in tears, shall reap a harvest of joy, which is a time of refreshing from the presence of God; compare Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6. and Acts iii. 19.

2. When sin is so great a burden, that he is weary of this body of death, and willing the infected house should be pulled down,

that the leprosy might be cured, that so he might never sin, or offend his Father more: the serious thoughts or sense of which is a heavy burden, and matter of grief, that makes him groan and complain. We in this tabernacle groan, being burdened; and O how bitterly did St. Paul complain, Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? He hath been in deaths often for the sake of his dear Lord; but this death, this body of sin, troubled him more than any. It was so great a burden to holy David, that he felt it in his very bones, Psal. vi. 2.

3. The godly man is fit to die, when the work of grace is perfected, and his regeneration work ended: when the believing soul hath his vessel full of oil, and the wedding garment of the glorious righteousness of Christ about him, then he is a vessel of honour prepared unto glory, Rom. ix. 23, wrought for the self same thing, 2 Cor. iv. 5, and made meet, or fit for the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. The ship that is laden or freighted, is fit to put to sea, and to sail from hence, or for its appointed port. The labourer is fit to receive his wages when he hath done his work.

So when the heaven born soul hath faithfully served his generation, and done the work in his place, calling, and relation, for which God sent him, and intrusted him, (though the best fall short, being in some degrees unprofitable servants) then he is fit to welcome death, though to the flesh it is the king of terrors. When the godly man, living or dying can, appeal to the heart-searching God, as Hezekiah did, Isa. xxxviii. and say, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, John xvii. 4. I have finished my course, and there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. iv. 8. This makes him fit and willing to depart, and to be with Christ.

4. When sin is pardoned, and the pardoned sealed, *i. e.* when the clamorous noise of the guilt of sin in the conscience is calmed and silenced by the blood of sprinkling, and his evidences for heaven bright and clear, so that his better country is within his view, and the gate of glory wide open, namely, abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. i. 11. Lot had a mind to prolong his time in Sodom, it was a goodly city, and he was not well assured whither to go when he had left it. But when

the gracious soul is assured of a better state, a better life, that is hid with Christ in God, so that he can say, as once an eminent man did, I shall but change my place, I shall not change my company, he may then (being sealed to the day of redemption) long for his dissolution.

5. When the heart is weaned from, and weary of this evil world, and so inflamed with love to Christ, that it cannot live without him, or be weaned from him. Having tasted of the grapes of Eshcol, he must go to Canaan, to see the good land, that goodly mountain. A fore-sight or glimpse of the sweetness, beauty, and glory of the Lord Jesus, will cause most vehement longing to be with him, now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation: for this we groan earnestly. And O how confidently, quietly, and comfortably may such a soul entertain the thoughts of death, that hath sincerely repented of all sin, and to whom sin is so grievous a burden, that he would die to be rid of it! and whose soul is filled and freighted with grace, and assured of glory, and the heart sent as a harbinger to heaven, before him! and indeed a serious and hearty consideration of our eternal state would provoke us to press earnestly after this.

To close up all, let me ask you in the presence of the great Judge of quick and dead, at whose dreadful tribunal ye must shortly stand, these following queries—

Query 1. Whether a seasonable preparation for death and judgment, viz. how you may escape hell, and come safe to heaven, be not the most urgent and important business you have in all the world? let your conscience judge and determine.

Query 2. Are they not in a very happy condition that do believe, repent, and turn to God with their whole heart? who, by living a life of grace, are truly prepared for death, out of that dreadful hazard of losing heaven, Rom. viii. 1; Psal. xxxvii. 37.

Querry 3. Is it not possible that you, being yet on this side of the grave and hell, may prepare for this evil day? Were you resolved upon it, it would be done: you have often intended it, promised it; when shall it be? none but the devil and your flesh will stop and hinder you.

Querry 4. Do you firmly believe the things here will fail, that death will come, that sin, that accursed thing, will sting, and that the impenitent sinner's case at the hour of death

will be sad and very desperate? Let me say to all such, there is not a night you lie down upon your beds but you run a very great hazard: if death should call, and you not ready, you must go, though you are ruined to eternity, Matth. xxv. 10, 11, 12, 19, 22, 23.

Querry 5. Have you so lived, as to be fit to lie down in a grave, to rise again and stand before God, who is a consuming fire? Do you know yourselves in a state of grace, that you are new born, that your evidences for heaven are clear and certain? Is your work done? Do your lamps burn? And have you a well grounded assurance that you are in the number of those to whom death will be a privilege? Philip. i. 21.

Querry 6. Can you cheerfully, and without dread, entertain the thoughts of a dissolution, and of leaving all your earthly and sensual delights? Suppose the dreadful Judge should at this instant send death into this place, with the names of five or six of you in his writ or forehead, and death should say, you, and you, this man, and that woman, must go along with me.

I have received a command from the great and terrible God (who hath the power of

death and hell), to bring you young man, young woman, this day or night, before the judgment-seat; I have often warned you, by sending my deputies, and that these ten, twenty, or forty years, every coffin, every dead corpse, or grave you have seen, was so many intimations of my coming. Now (saith death) I am come—look here upon my commission, see my dart, and my sting. This dart must kill thy body, and send thy soul into eternity. I command thee this moment to bid adieu, to take thy leave of friends, relations, houses, lands, pleasures of sin, once for all. Thou shalt never see or enjoy them more, Luke xii. 19, 20. O how can you think of your dying, the world's burning, the trumpet's sounding, the dead's rising and standing at the bar, and not fear and tremble! You sons and daughters of pleasure, did you consider what horror and astonishment dogs you at the heels, which will inevitably come upon you, as travail upon a woman with child, you would not say unto God, depart, and treasure up wrath, lay up scourges and scorpions, for your distressed souls against the last day.

Query 7. Let me ask you that pass for

saints, and hope for heaven, whether consciences in secret do not tell you, that you made but poor preparations for it; yea, it may be you have done less for heaven than many that are now in hell?

You say, you must die, and come to judgment: but how stands the case as to the other world? If you look downward to this world, it is well; but how is it within your precious souls? Do you believe that Atheists, Unbelievers, Drunkards, Swearers, Murderers, Thieves, Persecutors, Liars, Sabbath-breakers, Adulterers, Worldlings, are going swiftly to hell? Do you believe that Christ's flock is little, and not fear yourselves? Do you think that Esau, Judas, Ahab, Agrippa, Herod, Simon Magus, and the foolish virgins are in hell, and yet confident of your going to heaven? These have outgone many of you. Esau wept, and cried for the blessing, Heb. xii. 17. Ahab humbled himself, 1 Kings xxi. 29. Herod did many things, and heard John joyfully, Mark vi. 20. Agrippa was almost a Christian, Acts xxvi. 28. The Scribes were not far from the kingdom of God, Mark xii. 34. The foolish virgins were not profane, they took care to

trim their lamps, and knocked at the door. Now what sins have you left? What grace have you exercised? What duties have you performed, and how? Take heed you be not deceived: strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will strive to enter in, and shall not be able, Luke xiii. 24.

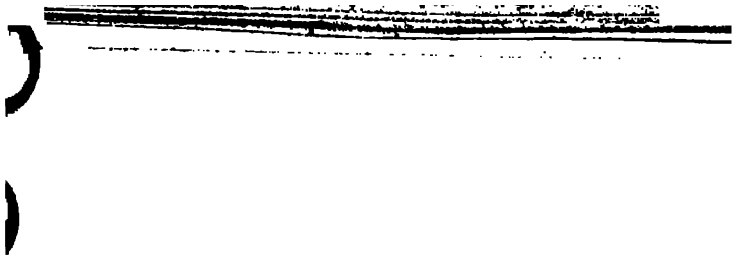
Query 8. You having so many warnings, times and means to prepare for death and judgment, and will not, who will pity you when you perish? God will not, Prov. i. 26, 27. Christ will not, Luke xix. 27. Angels, Saints, Ministers will not, all will say, away with them—let them be damned.

And O what a killing and amazing sight will Christ's coming in the clouds be to all that either denied his coming, or who would not prepare for it! His incarnation was terrible, Matth. ii. 3. His crucifixion was more terrible, Luke xxiii. 44, 45, 47, 48. But his being on the tribunal, will be most terrible: then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, Mat. xxiv. 30, and men cry to the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, Rev. vi. 15, 16. When they shall see so many thousands and millions of men and women dragged down with all the devils of hell, to the burning lake

of fire and brimstone, how will they then mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit, and with bitterness of soul, wish they had never heard of Christ, that they had been born among the heathen, or never had a being, or enjoyed a life of pleasure on the earth! How will the wretched sinner beat his breast, pluck off his hair, tear his bowels, crying out, (when he sees all hopes are gone) O that I had now no soul! or that this immortal soul were mortal! that I might now die and breathe no more! or that my sentence might be but to lodge with devils in this burning lake for ten thousand years, that so I might not remain in a state of punishment from the face and presence of God to all eternity!

O then pray, that serious thoughts of death may be always upon thine heart, and whither thou goest, let them go, and where thou lodgest, let them lodge, that thou mayest speak of them to thy children and family, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up! O let these great things of death and judgment be bound as a signet upon thine hand, and write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy

gates, that they may be always before thine eyes for thy good always, that thou mayest beware, lest thou forget the Lord thy God, and the everlasting concernments of thy immortal soul, and God's anger be kindled against thee and destroy thee suddenly with a mighty destruction.

Consider now what I have spoken, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things, 2 Tim. ii. 7. Which is that God wisheth in the text, "O that they were wise, that they understood, this, that they would consider their latter end!"

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